

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

RALPH ROY'S RICHES; OR, A SMART BOY'S RUN OF WALL STREET LUCK.

BY A SELF-MADE MAN.

AND OTHER STORIES



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RALPH ROY'S RICHES

OR, A SMART BOY'S RUN OF WALL STREET LUCK

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Introduces Ralph Roy.

"Ralph!" said Jared Snow, stock broker of No.— Wall Street, coming to the door of his private room and looking out into the reception-room.

"Yes, sir," replied Ralph Roy, his messenger, an alert-looking, bright-faced boy, springing from his chair as if it had suddenly turned red hot.

"Take this package to John T. Hemingway, Broad street. No answer. Rush!"

"Yes, sir," said Ralph, grabbing his hat, then the package, and making a bolt for the door leading into the corridor.

Ralph was one of the most active messengers in Wall Street. To see him hustling along the street one would think he had been endowed with a pair of seven-league boots, for he covered ground like a boy on roller skates.

He had been two years with Mr. Snow, and the broker was willing to swear that his like wasn't to be found in the district.

"When that boy is sent anywhere, he goes, and goes quick," Mr. Snow had remarked more than once to a brother trader. "He never stops to watch a dog fight, nor a man fight, nor a fire engine, when he's got a message to deliver. That boy is worth any two other boys in Wall Street.

At the present occasion Ralph Roy opened the office door and shot out into the corridor with his accustomed speed. Unfortunately a fat trader, coming to call on Mr. Snow, was in the act of entering at the moment.

Ralph didn't see him in time to avoid a collision. He landed against the stout broker's stomach like a stone from a catapult. The gentleman, by reason of his weight, resisted the impact fairly well, though he staggered back a couple of feet and uttered a grunt of pain and surprise.

"Beg your pardon, sir; didn't see you," said Ralph, picking up the gentleman's silk hat and returning it to him. "Hope you aren't hurt."

"Confound you, you knocked all the breath out of me."

"Very sorry, sir. Quite an accident. I'm carrying a rush message," and the boy was off down the corridor to catch the first elevator down.

"Rush message—humph!" muttered the fat man. "Seems to me that boy is always carrying messages. No use of reporting him to Snow.

He thinks the sun, moon and stars form a halo around that boy's head. Bless me! I won't get over the shock of meeting that boy for an hour."

So while the broker walked in and asked for Broker Snow, Ralph was going down the elevator. Ralph lived in a plain-looking flat in Harlem with his Uncle Jabez Coddington. The two of them constituted the whole family. They sent their washing to a laundry on the corner, and the wife of the janitor came up once a week and swept the rooms out. Ralph had lived with his Uncle Jabez as long as he could remember, and his path during that time hadn't been a bed of roses. Coddington was a man of sixty, though he looked older. He had never worked within Ralph's remembrance, but he always seemed to have money, though no one could accuse him of squandering it. Ralph, when he got old enough to think about the matter, presumed that his relative was living on his savings. This was a reasonable supposition, as Coddington had no visible source of making money. When Ralph graduated from the public grammar school his uncle secured him the position of office boy and messenger with Jared Snow. Coddington annexed his weekly envelope with unfailing regularity, but allowed him \$1.50 for carefare and lunches. Out of this meager contribution and tips that came his way from time to time Ralph in the course of time saved up the sum of \$50. One day he took this money and slapped it up as marginal security on five shares of Erie stock, with a little bank on Nassau street that catered to small investors. A broker had laughingly suggested to him to buy Erie if he wanted to make money, and he bought it. He had hardly made the deal when the stock took a boom that set the Exchange by the ears, and had all the traders guessing how high it would go. Ralph did a little guessing himself—he guessed Erie would go to 50. Ralph's guess was a good one, and he sold out at a profit of \$15 a share. That raised his worldly wealth to \$125, but he was careful not to confide the fact to his Uncle Jabez, for he had a pretty clear idea what would happen if he did.

A month later he saw B. & O. take an unward jump, and the recollection of his success in Erie induced him to buy ten shares and guess again. His second guess was just as successful as his first had been, and he collared a profit of \$225. At the time we introduce him to our readers he had just put up \$300 of his money on 30 shares

of M. & N. on the strength of a tip he had picked up in a certain broker's office. Ralph, as soon as he struck the sidewalk, made a bee-line for John T. Hemingway's office on Broad street. He had often been there before, and he and Hemingway's office boy, Bob Effe, were great friends.

"Hello, Bob," he said, "is Mr. Hemingway in?"

"Yes, but he's engaged."

"Take this package in to him and ask him if it's all right."

Bob took the package and disappeared into the private room. He returned in a moment or two with word that it was all right. Ralph immediately started for the door.

"Hold on, what's your rush?" asked Bob.

"Must go back to the office right away," replied Ralph. "See you later."

"Gee!" muttered Bob. "You never hold him a minute during business hours. He's always in a hurry. I don't believe in wearing myself out for any man."

"Bob!" said Mr. Hemingway, looking out of his private office.

"Yes, sir," replied Bob, jumping up in a hurry.

"Take this note around to Harris & Doubleday, and be quick about it."

Bob took the note and Mr. Hemingway disappeared.

The young messenger put his hat on in a leisurely way and walked slowly over to the door.

"I wish I was rich," he muttered in a discontented way, "and then I bet no man would order me around, bet your life."

Thus speaking, Bob sauntered out at the door. Ralph was back at his office in what some brokers would have considered a brief lapse of time. Mr. Snow would scarcely have been surprised if his messenger had returned in half the time. He was accustomed to Ralph's rapid transit methods, and regarded his performances as a matter of course. The broker and his fat visitor came to the door of the private room just as the boy returned.

"There he is now," said the stout man, whose name was Woodruff. "You ought to give him a calling down. He needs taming. He's as wild as a young colt."

"Ralph, Mr. Woodruff here complains that you butted into him on your way out a little while ago," said Broker Snow in a tone that was not very severe.

"Yes, sir. I apologized. Said I didn't see him and was in a hurry," replied the boy politely.

"Didn't see me, you young rascal! Ain't I big enough to be seen?" said the fat trader.

"Yes, sir; but I mean I didn't see you till I opened the door and then it was too late for me to stop."

"Why don't you leave your office like a reasonable being instead of flying through the door as though you were being chased by a mad dog?"

"I'm used to making time, sir."

"Seems to me you're too conscientious. Some day you'll be arrested for exceeding the speed limit," and the stout broker permitted the ghost of a smile to flicker around his mouth, which showed that he wasn't so very angry with Ralph after all. In fact, only a confirmed crank could hold anything against Ralph, he looked so good-natured always, and was as polite as a French dancing master.

"Ralph," said Mr. Snow, after the caller had gone, "try and curb the momentum of your departure from the office after this, or at least try and look before you pass through the door. Suppose a lady had been in Mr. Woodruff's place. You might have hurt her severely in your wild rush. I appreciate your activity, but there is such a thing as overdoing matters."

Ralph promised to look before he leaped after that, and his employer re-entered his room.

CHAPTER II.—Ralph Roy's Pluck.

As Ralph returned to his seat by the window he noticed that a rope and tackle were being hauled to an upper floor.

It was a mild spring day, and the lower sash was up the full distance. He leaned out of the window and looked down. A safe mover's truck was drawn up alongside of the curb, and as there was no safe on the wagon, Ralph judged that one of the safes in the building was about to be taken out. This was such a common occurrence in the business district that the young messenger was not particularly interested in the performance. He had seen safes raised and lowered a hundred times and there was no longer any novelty in the sight. At that moment one of the clerks in the counting-room called him inside the brass fence that divided the reception-room from the part occupied by the desks.

"Clean this ink-stand out and put fresh ink in the bottle," said the clerk.

"All right," replied Ralph, cheerfully.

He took the ink-well and carried it into the wash-room. The job took him ten minutes. Then Miss Jacobs, the stenographer, wanted him to go to the quick lunch house on Pine street, on the ground floor of the building, and get her some sandwiches and a piece of pie for her lunch, as she decided she wouldn't go out that day.

Ralph willingly obliged her, and notified the cashier where he was going. That errand took him ten minutes or so more. As he was returning to his seat again from Miss Jacob's den the shadow of the descending safe fell upon the window. One end suddenly swung around and smashed the corner of both panes, leaving a big jagged opening.

Ralph rushed to the window. He was startled to see that one of the ropes was on the point of parting. The man standing on the safe was in imminent peril of his life.

Only prompt action could save him. Ralph thrust one arm through the fractured window pane and reaching out grabbed the safe mover just as the rope parted. The safe fell like a flash of lightning, striking the sidewalk with a tremendous crash. The safe mover also fell, carrying Ralph and the window sashes down as far as the wide sill. There the man hung suspended in the boy's firm clutch, which was fastened to his stout jersey. Ralph was in no enviable position, either. His head and shoulders were projected through the space between the bottom of the two window frames, which held him pinned down because his left arm was using them as a purchase to sustain the weight of the unlucky man outside. The scene occasioned great excitement on the street, and a big crowd quickly gath-

ered and looked up at the windows of Mr. Snow's office. The question which agitated the beholders was whether the boy's grip or the man's jersey would give way first and let the unfortunate safe mover down with a run that meant certain death to him. The excitement in the neighborhood grew each moment. Every window in the various buildings in the vicinity was peopled with clerks and others gazing at the disquieting and unusual spectacle that contained all the elements of a possible tragedy.

At this trying juncture one of the safe mover's companions above came to the rescue in a nervy way. He lowered himself down the tackle till he reached the point opposite his comrade, and then clinging to the falls with both feet he reached out and grabbed the suspended man with both arms, thus relieving Ralph of the tremendous strain that had been on his arm.

"Now throw up the window and take him inside," he said to the messenger, as the crowd greeted his performance with a hearty cheer.

It was some moments before Ralph could move so nerveless had he become under the ordeal. Then slowly and with difficulty he withdrew his arms from the fractured break in the glass, raised himself and pushed the sashes up. The cashier reached him about this time and completed the job. Both then bent down and seized the safe mover by the arms, and assisted by another clerk drew him in through the window in a badly demoralized condition. The mob below, seeing that the man was safe, cheered again. By that time the street was as crowded and impassable as though the spectators had been down there by a fire. At that moment came the clang of a fire engine down Wall Street. Some excited individual, not comprehending the real cause of the trouble, had sent in an alarm, and a section of the department was on its way to the scene. Although everything was now over, the crowd did not immediately disperse. New arrivals came up and wanted to know what the excitement was about. A number of reserves from the Old Slip police station appeared and tackled the mob, which then got a reluctant move on. While these things were transpiring outside, Mr. Snow's office was the scene of much commotion. It was crowded with outsiders from the offices on the floor. All wanted to get a look at the plucky boy who had saved the life of the safe mover, and of the plucky man himself. The man soon recovered from his scare, and was joined by his venturesome companion who had largely contributed in completing his rescue. He shook hands with the exhausted Ralph and told the boy how grateful he was to him. The other also shook Ralph's hand and said he was a hero of the first water. Mr. Snow and the cashier likewise contributed their quota of commendation, but the boy was too much done up to appreciate the honors showered thick and fast upon him. His strained arm was feeling in a bad way, while the arm which had been thrust through the broken panes was bleeding from wounds made by the broken glass. Ralph had suffered more than the safe mover himself, but he bore up pluckily under his injuries, which were more painful than serious.

Somebody had rung for an ambulance, and the surgeon's services were needed to attend to Ralph's arms. His jacket was removed and the punctured and bloody shirt sleeve of his left arm

slid up, revealing half a dozen bleeding cuts. The surgeon soon attended to them, and afterward rubbed the strained arm in a scientific way that presently brought the boy great relief. A reporter now appeared to interview Ralph and the other spectators connected with the office in order to get all the facts for his story, which subsequently appeared in an afternoon edition. When the ambulance departed the last of the remaining crowd melted away, and Wall Street resumed its usual appearance; but the people in the offices around about were still talking about the incident.

The safe had smashed the pavement in front of the building, broken the iron girders beneath, and had gone down into the first cellar, the floor of which it had partially penetrated. The safe-moving company would have a pretty bill to pay for the damage, but that wasn't as bad as if the man who had been imperiled had lost his life.

Ralph, as he sat in his chair by the broken window, realized that he had distinguished himself in a sensational way, and his name was bound to be in all the newspapers. He was glad he had been able to save the safe mover's life, though in doing so he had suffered and was still suffering much pain and inconvenience. There is always a satisfaction in the knowledge that one has done his duty, especially under strenuous circumstances, and Ralph didn't regret the course he had adopted, even though he had come off worst in the case.

Mr. Snow told him he could go home for the rest of the day if he wished, but Ralph had no desire to avail himself of this permission. He went to lunch, however, and took his time about it, and attended to business afterward with his usual promptitude, but with somewhat less speed.

"Aren't you the plucky boy!" smiled Miss Jacobs, when he carried her some memoranda to typewrite around two o'clock. "How does your arm feel?"

"Stiff and sore, but I guess it will be all right in a day or two. The strain is about gone out of the other. I have the satisfaction of knowing that I suffered in a good cause, though I'm not anxious to repeat the experiment."

After going to the bank with the day's deposit the cashier told Ralph to go home, and he went.

CHAPTER III.—Ralph is Treated to a Great Surprise.

When Ralph let himself into the small flat where he lived with his uncle he found that Mr. Coddington was out. This was no unusual circumstance, for though the old man did not work he did not consider it necessary to be always lounging around the house. Ralph's arm did not feel over comfortable, so he lay down on the bed in his own room, which opened off a small private hall, and was not very light because the window opened on a narrow air-shaft. He began thinking over the stirring events of the day and then about his latest stock deal, which he had reason to believe would turn out a winner.

"I ought to make enough out of it to raise my capital to a thousand dollars," he thought. "Lord, if Mr. Coddington knew I was worth so much money he'd have a fit. He wouldn't rest till he

got it away from me, though it's my opinion he would have the time of his life doing it. However, there is not much danger of his learning that I am worth anything. He hasn't found out that I've made \$350 so far, so there is small chance of his making the discovery of any added prosperity that may come to me."

It is always pleasant to consider that one is making money, and Ralph reveled in the thought till the silence and the gloom of his room finally put him to sleep.

An hour or more passed away, and then a key rattled in the lock of the living-room, which opened and admitted a tall, spare, elderly man, with a smoothly-shaven face, that indicated a grasping and somewhat unscrupulous nature. He was accompanied by a well-dressed man of perhaps forty years. The visitor looked rather out of place in that cheap apartment. He bore about him a well-groomed look suggestive of wealth and refinement. A long, drooping mustache, carefully barbered, partially hid a somewhat senuous mouth; heavy sacks of flabby flesh hung under each eye, while his sleek cheeks and double chin spoke of high living. A massive and valuable watch chain, to which was suspended a diamond-studded charm with a Masonic emblem, crossed his capacious waist front from one vest pocket to the other. In one hand he carried a long, gold-handled walking-stick, while across his arm was negligently thrown a light overcoat. This gentleman was known to high society and among the clubs and high-toned sporting resorts as Delancy Jones, a man of wealth and good family. Half the city reporters knew Delancy Jones by sight, and the dramatic critics always noticed his appearance at "first nights" at the theaters.

The police could also tell many curious stories about Mr. Jones and his connection with gay life in New York; but these stories never reached beyond a small circle of the general public, who traveled more or less in the same orbit, but at a distance, that Mr. Jones did.

Anybody who knew Mr. Delancy Jones would have been greatly surprised had they seen him in Jabez Coddington's society and in the Coddington flat. They would have been even much more astonished had they seen how familiarly Ralph Roy's uncle behaved toward him.

"Come in, Mr. Jones," said the old man, removing his much worn Fedora hat and disclosing a shiny bald head surrounded by a fringe of iron-gray hair. "Go right through that hall into the sitting-room and I will follow you after I bolt this door, for we don't want to be intruded upon by that nephew of mine, who by some lucky chance happens not to have got home yet."

"You are sure there is no chance of our being overheard, Coddington?" said Mr. Jones with some anxiety.

"Quite certain or I would not have brought you here. I expected to find Ralph about and intended sending him on some bootless errand, but he has saved me the trouble. He has probably met some companion on his way home and remained out, which is often the case. I imagine he does not find the flat a paradise in which to pass his spare moments." And Mr. Coddington uttered a dry chuckle, long drawn out, though his face betrayed not a trace of humor. The old man noticed that the door of his nephew's room was

ajar, but did not think it worth while to look into the room, for he never knew Ralph to go in there any more than was necessary.

The entrance of Jabez Coddington and his elegant visitor woke Ralph up, but he did not get up until his uncle and Delancy Jones had passed into the dingy sitting-room. His sharp ears, however, had distinguished all that Mr. Coddington said, and the boys' curiosity was aroused. His uncle had evidently brought a visitor home with him for some purpose that flavored of secrecy. Ralph wondered who the caller was and why he had come there. He went to the door of his room and looked out into the narrow private hall. The sitting-room door, with its glass upper part, was slightly ajar.

"I think I'll take a peep at the visitor," thought Ralph.

Kicking off his shoes, he glided to the door and peered through the crack into the room beyond. The swell appearance of the gentlemanly stranger quite took his breath away.

"My gracious! He's a high toned gent for fair," he muttered. "Our flat ought to feel highly honored by his presence. I had no idea that Uncle Jabez was acquainted with such an aristocratic person. It's a wonder he would condescend to call here. It must surely be something of importance that brings him to such plebeian surroundings. I'd give a whole lot to know something about it."

Ralph for the moment overlooked the fact that he was not acting a very manly part in butting in uninvited into his uncle's affairs. The only excuse we can offer for him is that it was a most unusual fact for his uncle to have a visitor, and such a visitor as this one was provoking his curiosity to such a degree that he couldn't resist the temptation of trying to find out the reason that brought him there.

"Mr. Coddington," said the visitor in a cultured tone, "why do you live in such a common tenement as this?"

"Because it's cheap and living is high," replied the old man.

"Nonsense! You ought to be able to afford first-class quarters. With what the boy brings you in, and the allowance I pay you, there is no excuse for you to be penurious."

"So," thought Ralph, "my uncle gets his money from this man, then. I wonder how that came about?"

"Humph!" replied Coddington. "It can't matter to you how I live. It isn't likely you care how the boy lives, either."

"Not in the least," answered the gentleman, drawing a package of imported cigarettes from his pocket and lighting one with a match which he took from a silver matchsafe.

"Then there is no reason why we should discuss the matter," said Coddington.

"I merely mentioned the matter, that was all. It struck me as rather singular that any man as well fixed as you should——"

"Well fixed!" ejaculated the old man in an ungracious tone. "Do I look as if I was well fixed?"

"Frankly you do not," replied the visitor, blowing a few rings of smoke from his lips; "but you are just the same."

"You seem to know a lot about the matter," said Coddington resentfully.

"I know nothing, but I can surmise a whole lot."

"Indeed!" sneered the old man.

"I am not a Sherlock Holmes, my friend, but it does not require the detective instinct to make certain deductions from known facts. You have been in receipt of a liberal quarterly allowance for the last twelve years for taking care of that boy and bringing him up as your own nephew. Considering the way you have lived during the time the inference is plain that you should have saved a very comfortable sum of money, which, put out at compound interest in the savings bank or invested in gilt-edged securities, would double itself in the course of time," said Delancy Jones with a careless glance at Coddington.

Ralph's heart gave a great jump at the visitor's words. The boy he referred to was obviously himself, and according to his statement Jabez Coddington was not his uncle after all. Was the story then that the old man had told him about his dead parents a mere fabrication? If it was true that this aristocratic gentleman had paid Mr. Coddington liberal quarterly allowance to bring him up with the impression that he (Ralph) was his (Coddington's) nephew, there must be some peculiar mystery about his birth and parentage that the visitor had a purpose in hiding from the world. The bare supposition of such a thing made Ralph's heart beat very fast indeed, and he listened eagerly in order to learn more. He felt that he was now personally interested in the interview that was proceeding in the gloomy sitting-room.

"Humph!" retorted Jabez Coddington. "I don't say I haven't saved some money, but it isn't much. That boy has been a great expense to me since he has been in my charge."

"Gee! What a liar my uncle is!" muttered Ralph, who knew only too well that Mr. Coddington had not expended anything more on him than he could indecency help doing.

The visitor smiled sarcastically. He evidently did not believe Coddington's statement.

"My friend," he said suavely, between puffs of smoke, "don't try to hoodwink me. I'm too old a bird to be caught with chaff. Do you think I haven't had you under my eye all these years? Don't take me for a fool. I have trusted you, it is true, but I relied upon your self-interest to keep you silent and prudent. If I hadn't known you well for years before I entered into the bargain I should not have dared to take chances with you, for the stake was too important for me to leave any loopholes. I bought you body and soul, Coddington, and I hold you just where I want you. You know you have been in my power all these years—that you're in my power now. There is no statute of limitations to cover your case. A word from me today would put you behind the bars, and you know it."

"But you daren't speak!" snarled the old man.

"Dare not, eh?" and the visitor laughed a well-bred, sardonical laugh. "How do you know that?"

"Because I hold the secret of Ralph Roy's parentage—aye, and Ralph Roy's riches as well."

Ralph from his place of concealment uttered a gasp.

CHAPTER IV.—Ralph Learns a Tremendous Secret.

"Oh, indeed!" replied Delancy Jones, while a sneer curled his sensuous lips.

He did not seem to be at all disturbed.

"Yes, indeed!" roared Jabez Coddington, pounding the table savagely.

"Don't get excited, my friend," said the visitor quietly. "You might have a weak heart at your age and any undue emotion might react fatally on you. I should hate to be obliged to attend a coroners' jury to explain your sudden taking-off. I positively object to unnecessary publicity."

"Confound you! Why do you tantalize me, then?"

"At your age you ought to take things cool. You should have learned by this time that the man who gives way to his emotions is always at a disadvantage. Why don't you pattern after me, although I am more than twenty years your junior? You have never seen me show excitement even under provocation. I know better. That's one other reason why I am your master, Jabez Coddington."

"You're not my master!" snorted the old man furiously. "I will not have you say so. You could have me arrested, I admit, for an alleged crime committed years ago, but I don't believe you could bring proof enough against me to even have me held for trial."

"You don't believe anything could be proved against you, eh?"

"No, I don't."

The visitor was silent while he lit another cigarette.

"Coddington," he said after a short pause, "that's too transparent. You know you are afraid of me."

"I am not. If you held my life in your hands, as you have often taunted me, why need you pay me for keeping that boy at least, so handsomely as you have done? You might have compelled me to do for nothing the service you require."

"Not at all. I don't believe in using thumb-screw methods while I can afford to be liberal. I hold you under my thumb, but I have had no strong desire to press my advantage. I have merely used this power as an auxiliary force to keep you in your place should you ever feel like kicking at your traces. I have paid you on the principle that the laborer is worthy of his hire. You have been doing me a service, why shouldn't I pay you for it?"

"Well," replied Coddington impatiently, "you didn't come here to talk in this strain. You have an object in your visit. What is it?"

Delancy Jones flicked the ashes from the end of his gold-rimmed cigarette with his little finger, on which flashed a diamond of great beauty and value. He looked at the point of one of his patent-leather shoes, as if he expected to find inspiration in the mirror-like polish that shone even in the gloom of the room.

"Yes," he began, "I came here to make you a proposition."

"A proposition!" ejaculated the old man in some surprise.

"Precisely. Circumstances over which I regret to say I have no control make it necessary for

me to make a new arrangement with you about the boy, or call the matter off altogether. The choice remains with you."

"Has anything happened?" almost gasped Coddington, who fancied he saw his handsome quarterly allowance about to slip from his grasp.

"Yes, something has happened."

"What is it?"

"My friend, don't try to pry into matters that do not concern you. What has happened is my business, not yours."

"Is there any danger of my quarterly income ceasing?"

"It has ceased—with the last payment."

Coddington seemed to wilt as if ten years had suddenly been added to his age.

"And you don't intend to pay me any more?"

"I told you I had a proposition to make to you," said the visitor serenely.

"What is the proposition?" asked the old man, taking courage. "If it is payment in another way——"

"Listen. On second thought I will tell you what has happened. The boy's mother——"

"My mother!" fluttered the hidden Ralph.

"Well," said Coddington, "what about her?"

"The boy's mother has always believed the boy dead."

"Of course. Why shouldn't she?" said the old man impatiently. "Undeniable evidence was furnished her, as I understood, that he had died from a virulent attack of diphtheria, while she herself lay at death's door with the same disease, and that he was buried in a sealed casket in the family vault."

"Of course," replied Delancy Jones.

"Why, after twelve years of confidence in that belief a doubt now?"

"Women are strange creatures, as my varied experience with the sex has demonstrated. It doesn't take much to set them off at a tangent. The latest fad in the social swim is reading one's fate out of the crystal ball."

"The crystal ball?"

"A noted seeress—impostor, I call her—has been going the rounds with the mystic globe of crystal. She visits at the homes of the four hundred and for a handsome fee tells one's past, present and future out of that circular globe of crystal glass. She claims to be infallible, as a matter of course, and the female gulls seem to place absolute credit in her revelations. One very estimable person of my acquaintance assured me that her statements are simply marvelous. She told me that the seeress revealed to her every important event in her past life. At that rate I wonder some of the fortune teller's patrons are not afraid to consult the crystal," said Delancy Jones with a chuckle.

"I suppose the boy's mother has been told by this seeress that her son is not dead?" said Jabez Coddington.

"I am sorry to be obliged to confirm your supposition," nodded the visitor. "I had an unpleasant interview with her on the subject, and nothing I could say would shake her confidence in that female impostor, whom it would give me all the pleasure in the world to throttle if the thing could be done without publicity," added Mr. Jones with a savage note in his tone.

"Well, why need you worry? There is no dan-

ger now of her ever finding out the truth. A blank of twelve years is as good as a sponge for wiping out all evidence of the past," said Coddington. "I'm not going to undeceive her, and naturally you won't, so what do the predictions of any seeress amount to in the present case?"

"Very true, only there happens to be complications."

"What do you mean by that?"

"It appears the seeress is an unusually good guesser. I take that to be the secret of her success and popularity. Well, she told the boy's mother that her son was alive and living under an assumed name with an elderly man, whom she described, and the description fits you exactly, I regret to say."

"What!" roared Coddington, his eyes sticking out.

"She even described this tenement with considerable accuracy."

The old man began to look frightened.

"She also described the boy's present appearance."

"Are you telling me the truth?"

"I have no object in deceiving you. She told some other things, too. I believe, that I have not been informed of. At any rate, the lady views me distrustfully, as if she had her suspicions concerning my complicity in her son's fate. It is very annoying, I assure you, and—rather disquieting to me, for if she should find the boy at any time by an accident I would be placed in an embarrassing position, not to speak of the financial loss I would suffer through him coming into his own."

"Which you are living on," chuckled Coddington.

"Therefore," went on Delancy Jones deliberately, "it has become necessary for me to make a change in our existing arrangements."

"If I can help you I will."

"That is for you to say if you expect to receive any more money from me."

"What is your proposition?"

"It is this: I want the boy removed from this city to some distant locality. If you will take him to, say Oregon, or some other remote place, I will give you a lump sum as a payment for all future demands."

"How much will you pay me?" asked Coddington greedily.

"Five thousand dollars—\$1,000 down and the balance in two equal payments of \$2,000 each at intervals of three months. Is it a bargain?"

"The boy will lose his fine Wall Street job."

"Of course; but you can put him to work when you reach your new home."

"He won't make as much at anything else."

"He will in time."

"But the older he grows—he is eighteen now—the less hold I will have upon him and upon his wages."

"If you treat him right he isn't the kind of boy to go back on you."

"I don't know," replied the old man doubtfully. "I have always treated him like a son, and yet he doesn't seem to appreciate my kindness to him."

"Gee! What a liar!" breathed the listening Ralph.

"I want to know if it is a bargain, or must I make other arrangements?"

"It's a bargain," said Coddington somewhat reluctantly.

"All right. When can you start?"

"In a week, I suppose."

"Make it less. A whole lot might happen in a week. Start to-morrow night by the eight o'clock express over the Erie, and I will give you a bonus of \$500 cash at the station in Jersey City."

"I'll do it," said Coddington. "I'll sell everything out to a second-hand man in the morning and when the boy comes home from the office to-morrow afternoon I'll tell him that we are going to Chicago by the evening train."

"Very well. I will give you the \$1,000 now."

The visitor produced a small package, which he tossed to the old man.

"Count it if you can't take my word for the amount."

"Never mind. Your word is all right. I suppose I won't see you till you come over to the station with the extra \$500?"

"No. I leave everything in your hands. I know I can trust you," he said with significant emphasis. "Now I will go, and glad I will be to get out of this filthy tenement. How you can stand it is more than I can conceive."

As Delancy Jones got up, Ralph considered that it was high time for him to beat a hasty retreat to his room. He heard Mr. Coddington and his visitor walk through the little hall. Then he heard the drawing of a bolt and the old man bid good-by to the caller. Coddington then withdrew to the kitchen to prepare the frugal dinner that he was accustomed to cook for himself and Ralph, and the young messenger was left to still his beating heart and calm the tumult of the new thoughts which the interview he had overheard had given birth to.

CHAPTER V.—Ralph Cuts Loose from His Pretended Uncle.

It would be quite useless to attempt to analyze Ralph's feelings as he sat on the edge of his bed and thought over the astonishing revelation he had just listened to. He was staggered by the idea that he had a mother living, and a wealthy one at that, and that he was heir himself apparently to a fortune, which from all indications had been misappropriated by Mr. Coddington's aristocratic visitor, and was now being enjoyed by him as if it was his own. The question that interested him most was: Who was his mother? Her name had not been mentioned during the interview, nor had any hint of her identity been dropped by either the visitor or Mr. Coddington.

Even the name of the aristocratic caller was a mystery to him. It was clear that he had some close connection with Ralph's mother, or he would not have succeeded to riches belonging to her son, supposed to be dead. In order to get a clue to his mother he must first find out the identity of Mr. Coddington's visitor and then follow him up. But to do anything at all he must remain in New York, and it had been arranged that his pretended uncle was to leave the city by the eight o'clock express on the Erie road on the following night and take him (Ralph) along.

"He won't take me, you can bet your life," muttered the young messenger. "Little old New York

is good enough for me, and now I have a very strong reason for staying here. I intend to find my mother and recover my riches. As Mr. Coddington will insist on me accompanying him, the only thing I can do is to cut loose from him to-night or to-morrow morning without his knowledge. Then to-morrow afternoon when he is looking for me to return from my work I will go to new lodgings. Of course, there is bound to be trouble for he will look me up at the office right away, and I shall probably have a scene with him. But I don't care. Now that I know he has deceived me all these years I shall have no compunction in giving him the cold shake for good and all. If he prosecutes me in any way in his efforts to regain control of me I'll appeal to my boss if necessary, or take the law into my own hands in a way that will give Mr. Coddington the shock of his life."

Ralph having decided on the first steps he meant to take, walked softly to the door of the sitting-room with his hat on, and opening it slammed it to as if he had just come in. The old man poked his head out of the kitchen door.

"You're late in getting home today. Where have you been fooling your time away?"

"Oh, I've been taking things easy ever since I hurt myself saving a man from falling four stories to his death," replied the boy.

"What's that? You hurt yourself saving a man from falling?"

"That's right. The story is in all the afternoon papers. Here's one of them. You can read it for yourself," and Ralph handed him the paper, which he mechanically accepted but made no move to look at.

"You don't look as if you were hurt any," said the old man suspiciously.

"One of my arms was cut by the jagged glass of a broken window," replied the boy. "Look at my coat-sleeve."

Ralph held up his arm so Mr. Coddington could see where the cloth had been cut.

"Humph!" said the old man. "Supper is 'most ready, so you'd better set the table."

Ralph wondered if Mr. Coddington would let out any hint of the projected trip out West, but he didn't. When the meal was over the old man said he was going out, and left the boy to wash the dishes and clean up as usual. Ralph hurried through with the job and then going to his room began to pack all his possessions in an old suitcase that belonged to him. He found that the bag would only hold about half of his property, so he made a large bundle of the balance. The problem of getting his things out of the flat without Coddington's knowledge was simplified by the absence of the old man. He carried both the suitcase and the bundle to the home of an acquaintance, and the latter promised to keep them till he called for the things next day.

Mr. Coddington was still away when Ralph got back, so the young messenger turned in for the night and was fast asleep when the old man returned. Ralph left for the office at the usual time next morning, his pretended uncle telling him to be sure and come home early, as he had something for him to do. On his way downtown Ralph studied the market report of the previous day's operations on the Stock Exchange, and he saw that M. & N., the stock in which he was in-

terested, had gone up half a point and was now quoted at 65 1-2.

"That's better than if it went the other way, though half a point don't amount to a whole lot," he said. "Now that I intend to shake Mr. Coddington and live on my own hook I shall feel more independent. I'll bet I can get a good light room for \$2 a week and all I want to eat at a restaurant for \$5, including my lunches downtown. That will leave me \$2 for extras. I'll be about \$1.50 to the good by this new arrangement, and Mr. Coddington will be out the \$7.50 he has retained out of my wages. As long as I believed he was my uncle, and had some real sort of claim on me, I did not mind turning in my pay envelope to him, though he didn't treat me over well. Now, however, that I have discovered he is no relative at all, and furthermore has done his part during the last twelve years to keep me from learning that I had a mother and was entitled to riches in my own right, I have no desire to have anything more to do with him."

Ralph's arm felt comfortable now, but he thought it advisable to get permission to go over to the hospital to have it dressed again.

So when Mr. Snow came in he asked him if he could attend to the matter.

"Certainly, Ralph. Go right over now. One of the junior clerks will carry messages till you get back," replied his employer.

The young messenger was back in an hour ready to resume his duties, and he noted with satisfaction that the tape showed that M. & N. had gone up another half a point since the Exchange opened that morning.

About noon he carried a note to Mr. Woodruff's office.

"Well, young man," said the fat broker, when he was admitted to the private room; "I see you distinguished yourself yesterday at your office. Your activity in that direction is certainly to be commended. I dare say your only fault lies in your over-supply of animal spirits. I hope that after this you will refrain from making punching-bags of people who happen to come between you and the execution of a rush message."

"I intend to try and avoid any more collisions, sir," replied the boy politely. "I hope you don't bear me any hard feelings for yesterday's mistake of mine."

"That's past and gone, young man, so we'll say nothing more about it. There is no answer to the note you brought me," and the broker turned to his desk.

Business was lively that day and Ralph got no chance to go to lunch until after the Exchange closed at three o'clock. The ticker showed that M. & N. was up to 67, which represented a prospective profit of about \$50 on his deal so far. After leaving the restaurant Ralph went uptown to select a room somewhere below Fortieth street from a list of places he had cut from a morning paper. The first place he struck suited him. It was a nice light hall room in the back on the third floor of a private house, and he got it for \$1.75 a week. He paid a week in advance and then went uptown to get his suitcase and bundles from the home of his friend. By seven o'clock he had his possessions installed in his new quarters, and then he went to a Broadway restaurant for supper.

"I guess Mr. Coddington has had a dozen fits

by this time over my non-appearance. It isn't likely he'll go West tonight by the eight o'clock express, or collect that extra \$500 from his aristocratic fellow-conspirator. In fact, he will be out the \$4,000 he expected to get for keeping me out in Oregon or some other Western State, and he may have to cough up the \$1,000 he received in advance for services that it will now be out of his power to render," chuckled the young messenger as he pictured the old man's anger and consternation when he discovered that he had been euchered out of a good thing.

Ralph retired early that night and slept like a top in his new bed. When he awoke the sun was shining in at his window and the room looked quite cheerful.

"This is worth a dozen dark rooms in a flat," he mused as he dressed himself. "Gee! I'm glad things have turned out the way they have. If I can only find my mother and recover what appears to be coming to me, I'll be a swell guy myself. In that event I'll be able to set myself up as a broker some day after I have acquired the necessary experience. 'Ralph Roy, Stocks and Bonds, Securities Bought and Sold' would look nifty on a glass door, and I guess the brokerage business would suit me from the ground floor up."

When Ralph got out of the elevator and walked to his office a few minutes before nine that morning he found Jabez Coddington walking impatiently up and down the corridor waiting for him. The old man glared at him with angry eyes.

"Where were you last night, and why didn't you come home early yesterday afternoon as I told you to?" he demanded in a furious tone.

"I have taken new lodgings, Mr. Coddington, and I have decided to have nothing further to do with you," replied Ralph coolly.

"What!" roared his pretended uncle in angry amazement. "You have taken new lodgings?"

"I have. I am going to live by myself after this."

"You will do nothing of the sort," snarled Coddington.

"Who will prevent me?"

"I will. I am your uncle and guardian, and have authority over you."

"You're not my uncle. You have worked that fake on me for twelve years, but it won't go any longer."

Jabez Coddington stared at the boy aghast, as if he thought he had suddenly gone crazy.

"You must be out of your senses, young man."

"That so? Well, don't you worry about me. You have made enough out of me since you've had me with you. You ought to be able to live well on the profits of your rascality."

"What do you mean?" gasped the old man, paralyzed by the boy's words, which indicated a knowledge of the conspiracy in which he and Delancy Jones had been so long implicated.

"I mean just what I said, and you know what I mean, too. Now, you'd better go, as I've got to get to work. Here comes one of the clerks, so I can't stand here talking to you any longer. You needn't expect to see me at your flat any more, for I'm not coming there. Good-by."

Thus speaking, Ralph unlocked the office door and entered the reception-room, followed by the clerk, leaving Jabez Coddington outside in speechless consternation at the unexpected turn events had taken.

CHAPTER VI.—Ralph's Piece of Good Luck.

There was no change in the standing of M. & N. that day when the Exchange closed, and therefore Ralph's prospects were neither better nor worse than they had been twenty-four hours before. He took a light lunch at half-past three and then walked down to the Battery to put in an hour or so before going uptown. It was a pleasant afternoon and there were many occupants on the benches that overlooked the bay. Ralph sat down near an old gentleman who was very respectably dressed and carried a gold-headed cane. He was reading an afternoon paper and paid no attention to the young messenger at first. The boy watched the ferry-boats from Brooklyn plying between that borough and Jersey City, and the big railroad freight-car boats towed by powerful tugs. At length the old gentleman folded his paper and looked around. Ralph happened to glance toward him, and their eyes met. The old gentleman seemed struck by his face and stared hard at him. Ralph turned his eyes away, but his companion on the bench never removed his from the boy's countenance, which he seemed to be studying attentively.

"I beg your pardon, young man," said the old gentleman at length in a courteous tone. "Will you tell me your name?"

"Certainly, sir," answered Ralph with a smile. "My name is Ralph Roy."

"Thank you. I hope you will excuse me for my inquisitiveness, but you remind me of my dead son. You are the very picture of him as he was at your age."

"Don't mention it, sir," said the young messenger.

The ice was thus broken between them and Ralph soon learned that the old gentleman was a retired Wall Street operator who had been out of the Street for some twenty years.

"I am working in Wall Street myself," said Ralph.

"Indeed! As a messenger?"

"Yes, sir. I am with Jared Snow, No. — Wall Street."

"You live in the city, I presume, with your parents?" said the old gentleman with a keen look.

"I have a furnished room on West — street. I don't remember my parents. I was brought up by a man who claimed to be my uncle, but a day or two ago I found out that he was no relation of mine at all. As we did not get on very well together I left him and am now living on my own hook."

"So you don't remember your parents," mused the old gentleman, regarding the boy in a reflective kind of way. "Your uncle, or rather the person who represented himself as such, probably gave you some idea about your father and mother."

"He told me that they were both dead, and that he was the only relative I had left in the world."

"If he was not really your uncle, what was his object in posing as a family connection?"

"He had his reasons, one of which was that my wages afforded him a steady income," replied Ralph, who did not consider it wise to confide

too freely in a stranger, even though that stranger was apparently a very estimable old gentleman, who might be a millionaire for all he knew to the contrary.

"Oh!" ejaculated his companion, who seemed to think that a very good reason, though not a very creditable one.

He did not press Ralph for any more information, and presently remarked that it was getting late and time for him to go home.

"I should be very glad to have you visit me some time, Master Roy. I will write down my name and address for you, and any time you feel disposed to call of an evening or on Sunday afternoon, I shall be very pleased to have you do so."

"Thank you, sir. I shall be glad to call some time," replied Ralph.

The old gentleman handed him a card with his name and address written on it, and then bade him good-afternoon.

"He is a very pleasant and refined old gentleman," said the young messenger to himself. "He seemed to take a great deal of interest in me, and he was constantly looking at me—because I reminded him of his son, I presume."

Ralph remained at the Battery till it began to grow dark, and then he took a Sixth avenue elevated train uptown. He had his supper at a good restaurant, and after that he walked to Forty-second street and sauntered down the block where so many of the theaters display their brilliantly lighted fronts. One of the shows attracted his fancy and he decided to go in. He did not feel that he could afford a high-priced seat in the lower part of the house, so he walked around to the family circle entrance on Forty-first street and went in there.

After the performance, which he enjoyed exceedingly, he walked around to Forty-second street again and followed the tide of homeward-bound people toward Broadway and Times Square. As it was after eleven he turned down Broadway to go home. He was passing a swell-looking cafe when a party of four gentlemen, dressed in evening clothes, partially hidden by light overcoats, came out. He recognized one of them as Mr. Coddington's aristocratic visitor.

"I wish I could find out who he is," thought Ralph wistfully as he looked after the trio, whose movements showed that they were in no hurry.

Finally he decided to follow them. They led him up to Forty-third street and then over toward Fifth avenue. At length they walked up the steps of a handsome brownstone front and one of them pushed a button. The door opened and they disappeared within the heavy carved outer doors, which closed tight as wax behind them. Ralph made a note of the house and number for future reference and started for home, unaware that he had located a high-toned gambling establishment which was patronized only by people of wealth and social prestige. As he was passing Sherry's famous restaurant on Fifth avenue a gentleman and two elegantly dressed ladies, one of whom was apparently about sixteen years, came out to a carriage.

An attache held the door open for them to get in, and then slammed the door after the gentleman had said something to the driver. The incident would have made no impression on the young messenger only for the fact that when the younger lady got into the carriage Ralph thought

he saw something that flashed in the electric light drop to the curb. When the carriage rolled away he walked over to the place and saw what seemed to be a piece of jewelry in the gutter. He picked it up and discovered that it was an expensive diamond ornament.

"The lady dropped that," he said. "I must return it to her somehow. I'll ask the attache here. He gave the cabman his destination."

The man had entered a small glass-framed boxed enclosure near the entrance to the restaurant. Ralph went to the door of the cage, which was open.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but will you tell me who those people were who just drove away from here?" he asked.

The uniformed man looked at him a moment in a supercilious way.

"What do you want to know for?" he said gruffly.

"I have a special reason which I don't care to state."

"Well, that was the Honorable Mr. Grove, his wife and daughter."

"Where do they live?"

"No. — Fifth avenue."

"Thank you," replied Ralph, and then he walked away.

His original intention had been to restore the ornament that night, but the address was so many blocks up the avenue that he decided to postpone the matter until the following day. Accordingly he started for his lodging-house. Next morning one of the leading dailies contained a notice in the lost and found column describing the ornament which the daughter of Mr. Grove had lost the night before after leaving Sherry's and offering a reward of \$500 for its return. Ralph did not think of a reward in connection with the ornament, and having the address where the Groves lived, thought nothing more about the matter. He showed the ornament to Mr. Snow when that gentleman appeared at the office, and explained the circumstances under which it had come into his possession.

"That is a very valuable piece of lady's jewelry," said the broker after he had examined it carefully. "I should say it was worth something like a thousand dollars. You ought to get a reward for returning it. Did you look in the papers to see if it was advertised?"

"No, sir. I didn't think about the matter. I don't know that I ought to take anything for returning it. I think it is my duty to do that since I know the address of the lady to whom it belongs," said Ralph.

"That's very true, but nevertheless the loser, I have no doubt, will gladly pay you for the trouble you take in restoring it to her, as well as in appreciation of your honesty, for such a valuable bauble would prove a strong temptation to a finder whose principles are not so upright as yours. I should advise you not to refuse any reward that might be tendered to you, for a person who can afford to wear such expensive jewelry can well afford to make you a handsome present."

"All right, sir. If you think I am justified in accepting a reward I will do so," replied Ralph; "but it will have to be a voluntary offering on the person's part."

That afternoon, as soon as he had eaten his

lunch, the young messenger took a Third Avenue train to the Eighty-fourth Street station, where he got off and walked over to Fifth Avenue. When he reached the address given him by the Sherry attache he ran up the steps and rang the bell. It was some little time before the footman or second man of the establishment answered the ring.

"Is the Honorable Mr. Grove at home?" asked the boy.

"I ain't sure whether he is or not," replied the flunky with a strong London accent. "If you will 'and me your card and tell me your business H'I'll see."

"I haven't a card. Tell him my name is Ralph Roy, and that my business is important."

"Step h'into the 'all and wait."

Ralph entered and sat on a leather-covered chair. The footman walked back, knocked at a door and entered the room. Presently he returned.

"The Honorable Mr. Grove will see you. Follow me," he said in an impassive way.

Ralph in another minute found himself in the presence of a tall, dignified-looking gentleman, whom he recognized as the person who was with the young lady who lost the ornament the night previous.

"Well, young man, what can I do for you?" asked the Honorable Mr. Grove, member of Congress from the silk-stockings congressional district.

"Did your daughter lose a valuable orna——"

"She did. You have brought it, I suppose, and claim the reward I offered this morning in the ——," mentioning the name of the paper.

"I have brought it, but I make no claim for any reward. I did not know that you advertised for its return. I saw the young lady drop it in front of Sherry's as she was getting into the carriage, but was not certain about it until after the carriage had driven away. When I picked it up and noticed its value I asked the man who stood by the carriage door who you were and where you lived. He told me, so as soon as I got away from business to-day I came right up here."

"And you didn't see my advertisement?"

"No, sir."

"What is your name, and where are you employed?"

Ralph told him, and then handed him the ornament.

"Have you any idea how much that is worth?" said Mr. Grove.

"Mr. Snow said he thought it was worth close on to \$1,000."

"It cost \$1,200. You are evidently a thoroughly honest boy, and it will give me great pleasure to present you with the reward of \$500 I offered. Take a seat."

"If you mean that you intend to give me \$500, sir, I think that is too much for the service. I have no right to expect such a liberal compensation."

"Young man, you deserve every cent of it. In fact, I intend to raise the amount to \$600," and the gentleman took out his checkbook, filled in a check to Ralph Roy's order for the sum stated and handed it to him.

"I am very much obliged to you, sir, but——"

"That will do, young man. Put it in your pocket. Your employer will cash it for you. Accept my thanks, as well as my daughter's, for your trouble in the matter."

Thus speaking, the Honorable Mr. Grove pushed a button in the wall that brought the footman to the door.

"Show this young gentleman out, William," he said. "Good-afternoon, Mr. Roy."

Ralph bowed, followed the flunky, and was soon on the sidewalk.

CHAPTER VII.—Luck Follows Ralph in Chunks.

Next morning Ralph turned Mr. Grove's check over to Mr. Snow after endorsing it.

"Six hundred dollars, eh?" said the broker. "You are a fortunate young man. Take it to the cashier, and he will give you the money whenever you want it."

A few minutes afterward Ralph was carrying a message to the Mills Building. When the boy left the office that afternoon he was followed by a tall, spare, elderly man with long side whiskers, who bore a certain resemblance to Jabez Coddington. This person had been waiting for some time outside the entrance to the building. As soon as he started after Ralph another man on the opposite side of the street started up the street too. He was a Wall Street detective whose suspicions had been aroused by the noticeable way in which the person with the whiskers had started after the messenger.

The detective knew Ralph was a messenger, so he believed that it was his duty to see what was in the wind. Ralph went to an eating-house on Pine Street for his lunch, and the man with the whiskers stationed himself outside and waited. The detective stopped on the opposite side and kept his eyes on him. When Ralph came out and started toward Broadway the man with the whiskers took up the trail again, and the detective did likewise. At the corner of Nassau Street the Wall Street man tapped the other on the shoulder.

"Look here, my man, why are you following that messenger?" he asked sharply.

"Eh?" stammered the man with the whiskers with a disturbed look. "I'm not following him."

"Don't tell me that. I've been watching you since you shadowed that boy from the Olcott Building."

"I assure you——"

"Say, what's your game? You've got a pair of false whiskers on, I see. I guess I'll run you in on general principles."

The man with the whiskers protested earnestly, but the detective wouldn't listen to him. He marched the man to the nearest station and charged him with disorderly conduct. The false whiskers were pulled off, and then the smoothly shaven countenance of Jabez Coddington was revealed.

"I don't know his face," said the detective, "but I have no doubt his photo is at 300 Mulberry Street."

The detective referred to the Rogues' Gallery at Police Headquarters. The result was that Mr. Coddington was locked up in spite of his vigorous protests, and his rage and dismay was considerable. When he recovered his composure later on he sent a note to Delancy Jones, in which he stated the circumstances connected with his arrest. Then he waited for his aristocratic accomplice to come to his rescue. In the meantime, Ralph, un-

conscious of what was happening to his pretended uncle, took a car and went uptown. M. & N. was up to 69, and he had \$600 in cash tucked away in an envelope in the office safe, so he was feeling pretty good. Had he known that Jabez Coddington had come downtown disguised with the intention of following him to find out where he lodged he might not have felt quite so easy in his mind. Next morning things began to look lively around the M. & N. standard, and by eleven o'clock the stock was booming. The usual excitement attended the rapid rise of the price, which at two in the afternoon had gone up to 80. It was up to 86 at half-past two, and Ralph, having an opportunity to go to the little bank on Nassau Street, ordered his thirty shares sold. It was done inside of ten minutes and yielded him a profit of \$600. On the following day when he got his check he found he was worth a little over \$1,500 all told.

He slapped the money into 150 shares of L. & S., which had gone on a boom of its own account, and after holding them for days sold out at a profit of \$10 a share, which raised his working capital to \$3,000. His two successes, coming one on top of the other, added to the reward he had received for returning the diamond ornament, made him feel as if he was the young cock of Wall Street. It was scarcely more than two weeks since that his whole cash assets amounted to only \$350, which he thought a princely sum at the time, and now he was worth nearly ten times that much.

"Talk about luck—I'm right in it!" he said gleefully. "Looks as if I had a winning streak of Wall Street luck on. I must make all I can while the sun shines on my side of the street."

With this purpose in view he kept his eye on the market, watching for another chance to add to his pile. He didn't neglect his duties, though, for he was too conscientious to do anything contrary to the interests of his employer. But when a person has a run of luck on, everything seems to come his way, just as when one is up against hard luck everything works crooked. So it need occasion no surprise when we say that a few days later Ralph found out that a syndicate had been formed to boom D. & C. shares. He lost no time in taking his \$3,000 to the little bank and putting it up on 300 shares of that stock, and they were bought for his account at 72, which was low-water mark for D. & C., according to past performances.

Ralph had not neglected the object uppermost in his mind—to find his mother and recover the riches that he believed he was rightfully entitled to. He spent every night along upper Broadway on the lookout for the man who had, in his estimation, been the cause of his dropping out of his proper station in life. He wanted to discover this man's identity, and then by following that up he felt assured it would ultimately lead him into the arms of his mother. It was a great satisfaction for him to know that the seeress with the crystal globe had awakened a strong suspicion in his mother's mind that he was alive, in place of moldering away in a sealed casket in the family mausoleum, and that base conspiracy had deprived her of her boy, and him of his heritage of riches. It was likely that she would make a strong effort herself to find him, and thus both

of them working toward the same end ought to win out. On the evening of the day he made his latest deal in D. & C. he ran across Coddington's visitor for the third time. When Ralph saw him he was getting out of an auto in front of a music hall, and he had a swell like himself with him.

He ascertained that the performance would be over about eleven, so he walked away to put in the time at a near by billiard parlor. His inexperience with the habits of men about town led him to suppose that the man he was after went to the music hall to see the whole show, just as he would do himself; but nothing was further from the intention of the gentleman in question. Delancy Jones rarely stayed to see any show out. He and his companion went in merely to pass an hour or so before going to some other resort in the white-light district, so when Ralph returned to watch for him at the close of the show his errand was fruitless.

In the meantime, Jabez Coddington was having his bumps. Delancy Jones, on receiving his accomplice's note, hastened to help him out of his scrape. A little money judiciously used where it would do the most good succeeded in producing the influence necessary to secure Coddington's discharge. After a consultation with Jones, Ralph's pretended uncle adopted another plan to find out where the boy was living. Before he could put it in operation the old man was hit by an automobile, and he was carted to a hospital. Thus kind fortune was working in the interest of the young messenger, who had no suspicions of the schemes his enemies were trying to work for his undoing.

CHAPTER VIII.—Ralph Unsuspectingly Visits the House Where He Was Born.

While Coddington lay groaning and cursing his hard luck in the hospital, Ralph continued on in the even tenor of his way. He thoroughly enjoyed his freedom from the control of Coddington, and would have been as happy as any boy could be but for the fact that his mission to locate his mother, and, incidentally, his riches, was not meeting with very glowing success. The man with the drooping mustache seemed to be a very elusive personage. While it seemed apparent that he was a regular habitue of New York's gayest resorts, Ralph rarely ran across him in the neighborhood of his haunts, and when he did the boy was unable to get a line on his identity. So while Ralph was lucky in Wall Street and fortunate in eluding the snares of his enemies, he was balked in the main object of his life.

Ralph kept his eye on D. & C. He had inside information of for all that there is many a slip between the cup and the lip and as he had all his money up on margin, he naturally could not help being anxious over the outcome. Playing the market is only a risky game of chance, any way. Luck counts as much as anything else in the scale. Dealing on margin is considered little better than taking a gambler's chance. You buy 100 shares of a stock and put up \$1,000 security in expectation that the price of the shares will rise. If the stock goes up ten points, and you sell out, you win \$1,000, less \$25 commission and the interest for so many days on the amount the broker

advances to carry your deal. If the stock goes down you lose \$100 on every point below what you paid for it, plus the interest and commission.

A slump of about nine points is enough to wipe out your \$1,000 if you fail to put up more money to save yourself. Ralph knew what he was up against. He knew that he couldn't put up additional margin in case luck went against him, so it was a pure gamble with him. He banked on his run of luck continuing, and it did. In a week D. & C. was up to 80, a rise of eight points. Then it began to go up with a rush, and the traders went dippy over the excitement that ensued. Ralph followed its course on the tape, as often as he could get a look at it. When it got to 90 he concluded he wouldn't take any more risk and ordered his shares sold. The little bank's representative in the board-room got 90 for the stock, and when Ralph got a settlement he found that he had made \$5,400 profit.

As he got back his \$3,000 deposit he was now worth over \$8,000. It was about this time that Jabez Coddington was discharged from the hospital. Delancy Jones had paid him several visits while he was at the public institution, because he was getting more anxious every day about the way things were going. He knew that Ralph's mother had a detective in her pay, and the man was hunting the city for the tenement and the man described by the seeress, and there was no saying what might come of his search. The aristocratic rascal felt as if the sword of Damocles hung above his head by its silken string, which might part at any moment and lay him out. As long as Ralph Roy remained free and untrammelled in New York, Delancy Jones was conscious that he was not safe. If the boy was found by the detective he (Jones) would be ruined, both in pocket and reputation. Only family considerations could save him from going to Sing Sing, and the bare possibility of exchanging his gay life in Manhattan for the seclusion of a prison cell, and his fine raiment for coarse prison garb, gave him many a cold sweat in the privacy of his apartments. Still his nerve was superb, for he visited Ralph's mother occasionally, and seemed not at all disturbed by the knowledge that she now viewed him with disfavor. It was Friday that Ralph got his check from the little bank, cashed it at the paying teller's window, and then stowed it away in a safe deposit box he had rented in the Washington vaults on Wall Street. He treated himself to a new suit of clothes and several other new things that he felt he needed, and on Sunday afternoon he went up to No. 7 East Street, near Fifth Avenue, to visit the old gentleman he had met in Battery Park.

The old gentleman's name was Alonzo Harding, and Ralph found, as he expected, that he lived in a fine brown-stone front house in a swell neighborhood. A French maid answered Ralph's ring, and the boy asked if Mr. Harding was in.

"He is. Step in," was the reply.

He was shown into an elegant parlor, and the maid went away to tell the old gentleman that Ralph Roy was below. She returned in a few minutes and told the young messenger to follow her. He was led upstairs and introduced into a large room decorated in blue and gold. Here Mr. Harding was awaiting him.

"I am delighted to meet you again, my young

friend," said the old gentleman, shaking the boy cordially by the hand and leading him to a seat. "I have thought about you several times, and I began to fear that you were not going to call."

"I always keep a promise," replied Ralph. "After you were so kind as to invite me I would have been lacking in courtesy if I failed to visit you."

The old gentleman smiled, and then they drifted into a general conversation. An hour and a half passed away, and then Ralph said he guessed he'd have to go.

"I hope you will call again soon, Master Roy," said Mr. Harding.

"I will be glad to do so, since you wish it," replied the boy.

"I would like you to meet my daughter-in-law. I would take you around to her house now but she is out of the city on a visit. I am living with my nephew, Mr. Delancy Jones, and his wife and family. I would introduce you to Mrs. Jones, only she is out driving in the park. My nephew is seldom home. He belongs to quite a number of clubs, and spends the greater part of his time at one or another of them."

Ralph said he would be glad to meet the old gentleman's daughter-in-law, little dreaming that that lady was his mother. The name of Delancy Jones had no significance to him, as he was unaware that this was the name of Jabez Coddington's aristocratic visitor, and the man whose identity he was so anxious to discover. He had been the guest for an hour and a half of his own grandfather, and yet neither suspected the relationship that existed between them, though it is true the old gentleman was strongly impressed by Ralph Roy's extraordinary likeness to his dead son, the boy's father. Mr. Harding had not mentioned this fact to his daughter-in-law for fear of calling up painful recollections in the lady's mind; but he determined to introduce Ralph to her as a young friend in whom he was greatly interested and see if she herself noticed any resemblance between the boy and her deceased husband.

It was really a most extraordinary circumstance that Ralph should have visited the house where he was born, and the home of the man he was seeking to know; and that he should have had a long talk with his grandfather, and yet nothing had come of it. Life is full of equally strange happenings, which only goes to prove that truth is stranger than fiction. While Ralph was talking to his grandfather that afternoon, Delancy Jones was not lolling in luxurious ease at one of his clubs, as his uncle supposed he was, but was closeted in a moderately-sized room in a cheap lodging-house on the East Side with his fellow-conspirator, Jabez Coddington.

"You've got to do something about getting that boy away from New York, Coddington," he was saying in a tone that showed he meant business.

"Three weeks have passed away since the boy gave you the slip, and I've been on the anxious seat all the time. If you can't carry out our bargain I must make other arrangements. In that event you can expect no further pecuniary contributions from me."

"I've done the best I could in the matter, but between that confounded Wall Street detective and the automobile that ran me down I've been prevented from getting a line on that boy's uptown quarters. I'm all right again, and will get

busy once more. Have a little patience and I will earn that \$5,000, and at the same time make your position as safe as it has been these twelve years past," replied the old man in a confident tone.

"Well, I'll give you another chance, but you've got to show results. I feel as if I were standing on the brink of a precipice. That confounded seeress, who fortunately is in Philadelphia at present making monkeys of the society matrons there, has involved me in all this trouble with her crystal globe. She may return here at any time, for the field is a fertile one for her talents, and I dread lest she put a few more suggestions into the mind of the boy's mother that might put the sleuth now on the case on the right track of Ralph Roy. So you see no time is to be lost."

"No time shall be lost. I will make another attempt to-morrow to locate the boy's lodgings, and should I succeed I will let you know at once, and also what plan I intend to adopt for getting him away from the city."

"Very well, Coddington. I shall be at the Marathon Cafe, on Broadway, to-morrow evening between nine and ten. I shall expect you to report to me what progress you have made in this matter."

With these words Delancy Jones got up and suggested that Coddington show him to the door. Five minutes later he was on the sidewalk en route for the Union Club.

CHAPTER IX.—Ralph Walks into a Trap.

Ralph reached the office at the usual time next morning and put in his time, until sent on his first errand, reading the daily *Wall Street Argus*. He made it a point to keep abreast of all the financial intelligence, and he was as well informed, in a general way, as many brokers. Ralph was on the lookout for another opportunity to increase his capital, although he was not over sanguine that the chance would crop up soon. His run of Wall Street luck, however, was still shadowing him, and as a consequence that afternoon he got hold of advance information about the coming consolidation of two Western railroads, and he hastened to stack 8,000 of his chips on one of the roads.

That is, he bought 800 shares of R. & S. at 62, and was satisfied he had got the stock at bargain-counter rates. When he reached the corner of Pine Street and Broadway that afternoon on his way home, a tall, spare man, with a long white beard, which gave his face a patriarchal look, was standing in the doorway of the corner building. This venerable-looking individual fell in behind Ralph and followed him to the platform of a Sixth Avenue elevated station. Both boarded the same car, the old man taking a seat not far from the boy. Ralph got out at Forty-second Street, and so did the venerable party. In fact, the white-bearded man followed the young messenger all the way to his lodging-house, the number of which he made a note of and then walked away. The reader will probably guess that the old man was Jabez Coddington in disguise; at any rate, such was the fact. Coddington returned to his own lodgings in a satisfied frame of mind, and when he reached his room he removed the beard and changed his clothes.

"I've got him spotted at last," he muttered. "My next move will be to get him under my control and away from the city. The question is how can this be managed? It will take delicacy and tact. I can't afford to be arrested again, for it might go hard with me in spite of the influence Delancy Jones can secure with his money."

He spent the next hour figuring on the problem, and then went to supper. When he met Mr. Jones at the Marathon Cafe that evening he had a scheme which he submitted to his fellow-conspirator. The aristocratic gentleman thought the plan a good one, and nodded his approval. So it was resolved to put it through. Unconscious that a fresh conspiracy had been hatched against him, Ralph attended to his duties next day in his customary chipper way. The market was not over lively, for the D. & C. boom had been followed by a slump that left prices much depressed and business somewhat on the hog. Ralph, however, could not complain of lack of work, for he delivered a lot of messages and attended to other errands between the hours of nine and three. Then things slackened up, and at twenty minutes after three the young messenger went to lunch.

After that he went uptown to his room and put in the time to seven o'clock reading, by which time he felt hungry enough to go out for his supper. He did not return until ten o'clock, for he put in the evening hanging around Broadway and Times Square on the lookout for the gentleman with the drooping mustache. He did not know that every movement of his was being watched by the same old white-haired man who had followed him uptown the preceding afternoon. This was Coddington, as the reader knows, and he wondered whom Ralph was waiting for, for the boy's actions clearly showed that he was looking for somebody to come. Ralph got tired of the job about ten and gave it up for that night. Coddington gave a signal to a cab-driver whose rig had been standing near the curb for a long time. The driver understood and slowly followed the white-haired man, who in turn kept the boy in sight. When Ralph turned down the street where he lodged, Coddington got into the cab and directed the driver to overtake the boy as he approached No. —. The vehicle drew up in front of the house just as the young messenger was about to mount the steps.

"Hello, young man," said the driver. "Are you Ralph Roy?"

"That's my name," replied Ralph, regarding him with some surprise.

"I've been sent for you."

"Sent for me?" answered the boy, more astonished than ever.

"Yes. Mr. Jared Snow directed me to call here and take you to his house."

Ralph wondered what his employer wanted to see him about at that time of night. It was certainly an unusual circumstance for the broker to want to see him hours after the office had been closed for the day.

"I suppose you have no idea what he wants with me at this hour?" he said.

"No. He telephoned our stable for a cab to go to this number and bring a boy named Ralph Roy, who lodged here, to his house. I was put on the job, and that's all I know about it," replied the driver in an apparently frank way.

Although the matter wore a decidedly curious look Ralph had no suspicions that there was anything crooked about it. If Mr. Snow had sent for him it was his duty to go. It must be something important, and therefore it wouldn't do to disappoint his employer. So he swallowed the bait as the driver descended from his perch and held the door of the cab partially open for him to get in. It was not until Ralph had his foot on the step of the cab that he noticed there was some one in the vehicle. He saw it was an old white-haired and white-bearded man.

"Step in," said that person in as soft and friendly a tone as he could assume.

Ralph stepped in, the driver slammed the door, mounted his perch, took up the reins and drove down the street toward the North River at a rapid clip. This was not the proper direction to take to go to Mr. Snor's residence on Madison Avenue, but Ralph did not take special notice of the fact. He was more interested in the presence of the old man.

"You are doubtless surprised at this summons," said the disguised Coddington.

"I am," said Ralph. "Can you throw any light on the subject?"

"I can. Mr. Snow has been called to attend the last moments of an old gentleman who served him in the capacity of cashier and head bookkeeper when he first went into business many years ago. The gentleman came into a small fortune, which he has been living on. Now that he is about to die he has called on Mr. Snow to act as executor and trustee of his estate. The will is ready to be signed, and Mr. Snow thought he would like to have you act as one of the witnesses to the testator's signature, so he has sent for you to meet him at the old gentleman's house. The cabman picked me up on the way, and that accounts for my presence in the vehicle."

This explanation was given in so frank a way that Ralph believed the white-haired old man, though he thought his voice bore a familiar ring. That amounted to little, as the tones of different people frequently bear a striking resemblance to one another. The disguised Coddington having said all that he considered necessary relapsed into silence, and no further conversation took place during the rest of the ride. Ralph looked out of the window and noticed that the cab was speeding down Tenth Avenue. In the course of half an hour the vehicle was threading its way through the crooked streets of Greenwich Village, which is a very old section of New York City, just below Fourteenth Street on the West Side. The dwellings here wore a shabby and ancient air, like an old man out at the elbows. Once upon a time they had been the homes of very nice, refined people, but that was a great many years ago, when Greenwich Village had an identity of its own. Now the people who owned or rented the houses made a business of renting out cheap rooms to any one who applied for such accommodation. The cab stopped in front of a three-story brick house, that was neither better nor worse than its neighbors.

"Get out, my young friend," said the white-haired impostor.

Ralph stepped on to the sidewalk, and was followed by the disguised Coddington. The cabman immediately started off and disappeared up the street. The white-haired man preceded the boy.

up the four steps that led to a small square stoop and pulled an old-fashioned bell handle. The summons was answered by a hard-featured woman in a cheap calico dress.

"I presume Mr. Snow, the broker, has arrived?" said the old man.

"He has," replied the woman with a peculiar look. "Step in. He is in the little back parlor waiting for you."

"Step in, my young friend," said the disguised rascal suavely to Ralph.

The young messenger entered the house and found himself in a dark, shabby and ill-lighted hall.

"The door is right ahead of you," said the woman, lingering behind to fasten the door with a bolt and chain.

The white-haired man gently forced Ralph onward, opened the door and ushered him into a small room, poorly furnished with old-fashioned horsehair stuffed chairs and a sofa of the same material. There was no carpet on the floor, but there were two rugs. On the smaller one stood a heavy arm-chair with carved handles.

"I don't see Mr. Snow," said the old man, glancing around the room. "Sit down and I will hunt him up. I suppose he is upstairs with the old gentleman."

The rascal indicated the chair standing on the rug near the center of the room. Ralph, without any suspicion that his taking possession of that particular chair was a part of the plot, seated himself in the massive arm-chair. The white-haired man walked out of the room and closed the door behind him. Suddenly the profound stillness of the room was broken by a sharp click, which seemed to come from the chair. Then, to Ralph's surprise and dismay, a pair of steel clamps suddenly folded across his arms, holding him helpless in the chair. At the same time the rug and chair started to sink through the floor. The boy uttered a low cry of consternation and struggled in vain to rise. Chair, rug, boy and trap descended rapidly perhaps a dozen feet into a black void, while a duplicate trap noiselessly slid into the hole above and fitted it exactly.

CHAPTER X.—Ralph Has It Out with Coddington.

The chair came to a rest on a floor below with a slight shock. To say that Ralph was startled by the swift descent into the lower regions, as well as the transition from a dimly lighted room to a place as dark as the fabled caves of Erebus, would but mildly express his feelings. The clamps attached to the chair held him as fast as ever, so that it was impossible for him to leave the chair.

"What in thunder does this all mean?" he asked himself. "What crooked game am I the victim of? And what is the object of it? If it is robbery, it is mighty little I've got on my person. I shouldn't think that crooks would take the trouble to carry me from my lodging-house down here in a cab without they had some pretty good assurance that I was worth plucking."

Ralph cudged his brains to account for what seemed to be a mystery to him.

"That cabman enticed me into his vehicle by

saying that Mr. Snow sent for me. What does he know about Mr. Snow or my connection with Wall Street? And the old white-haired gentleman seems to be in the plot, too, with his explanation about a dying old bookkeeper who wanted my employer to act as executor and trustee of his will. There is something extremely funny about the whole thing. No, it isn't funny at all; it's plaguey serious, that's what it is."

Ralph made several attempts to free himself from the steel clamps, but he met with not the slightest success, and he finally resigned himself to wait until somebody came there. As the clamps were covered with soft padded stuff they did not hurt his arms, for which he was truly thankful. As his eyes became accustomed to the gloom he dimly made out that he was in a furnished room in the basement of the house. He could feel a carpet under his feet, and there seemed to be pictures on the walls.

Hour after hour passed in absolute silence, and the stillness of the place gradually overcame the boy and he fell asleep. Finally daylight came and he woke up to find himself in the same position. The room was light now, and he could see about him and size up his surroundings. They were nothing to brag of. Everything was old-fashioned and worn-out. He heard somebody moving around in an adjoining room. Presently a door opened a few inches and he saw what appeared to be a woman peering in at him. He judged it was the tough female who admitted him and the white-haired rascal into the house. She closed the door and there was no further sound for perhaps fifteen minutes, then a door facing him opened and the white-haired man walked in.

"How did you pass the night, my young friend?" he asked with a peculiar chuckle.

Ralph had heard that odd chuckle many and many a time before and he recognized it at once. He knew the venerable-looking party before him was none other than his pretended uncle, Jabez Coddington, and a light flashed across his brain.

"I know you, Mr. Coddington," he said coolly, "so you might as well take off your disguise."

"Oh, you do know me, eh? Your eyes appear to be better than they were last night," chuckled the rascal once more. "Well, you've given me a lot of trouble since you took French leave from the flat, but I was determined to get hold of you again. You played me a nice trick, but the boot is on the other leg now."

"What's your object in all this?" asked Ralph. "Do you imagine you can bulldoze me into going back to live with you? If you do, you've got another think coming. I'm through with you for good and all."

"I think not, young man. I am your uncle and guardian——"

"No, you're not. That game is played out, as I told you the morning we met in the corridor outside of Mr. Snow's office."

"Perhaps you'll inform me how you found out I am not your uncle?"

"No. I'm not giving the source of my information away. I've got it from reliable authority, and that is all you need know."

"I insist on you telling me," said Coddington angrily.

"You can insist all you want to, but it won't do you any good," replied Ralph defiantly.

Coddington looked mad.

"Don't you realize that you're in my power?" he said.

"It seems I am for the present, but I guess your power won't last long."

"Don't be too sure of that. There is nothing to prevent me keeping you here indefinitely. Nobody will miss you but your boss, and he won't know what has happened to you. You're as safe here as if you were in a desert."

"I asked you what your object is in kidnaping me to this place."

"To bring you to your senses."

"I haven't lost them, thank you."

"Well, to get down to business—I am going West and I want you to go with me."

"I don't care to leave New York. I've got a good job here, and I'm getting on fine. Besides, I'm through with you, anyway."

"I'm not through with you," returned Coddington savagely.

"That's nothing to me."

"You'll find it means a lot to you. Will you come with me willingly, or won't you?"

"No, I won't."

"Then you'll remain a prisoner in this house till you agree to do as I want."

"All right, let it go at that."

"You talk big," roared the rascal, "but you'll soon whistle another tune."

"Will I? Try me."

"You're a confounded jackanapes!"

"And you—what are you? You've taken an unfair advantage of me for the last twelve years—you and——"

Ralph stopped short. He had not intended to let out what he knew of the conspiracy of which he had been so long a victim.

"Go on. Finish what you were going to say."

"Yes, you have. You've learned something. Come out with it."

Ralph remained silent.

"Tell me what you have learned, and how?" gritted Coddington.

"I'll tell you nothing except my opinion of you. You're a rascal of the first water, and your finish is coming."

"What do you mean by my finish is coming?" asked Coddington uneasily.

"That's my business."

"Tell me, or I'll——"

The rascal advanced threateningly on the helpless boy.

"No, I won't tell you. I dare say you're capable of pounding me in my defenseless condition. That's the way all cowards act."

Coddington stopped and glared at him.

"I'll find a way to make you speak," he said threateningly.

"Go on and find it, then."

Coddington walked savagely up and down the room, then he abruptly walked out of the door and slammed it after him. Left alone, Ralph wondered what was going to happen next.

CHAPTER XI.—Ralph Gives Delancy Jones the Shock of His Life.

The young messenger heard sounds in the next room again, and he guessed the old woman was there doing something. Presently he heard the

noise of a pan falling on a hard floor, and it struck him that the next room was the kitchen, and that the woman was getting breakfast ready. Nearly an hour passed and then Coddington re-entered the room, followed by the woman bearing a tray on which was some cooked food and a cup of coffee. The rascal pushed a small table in front of Ralph and the woman placed the tray upon it, after which she left the room.

"There is your breakfast—steak, fried potatoes, rolls and not coffee. Looks good, doesn't it?" he chuckled.

It certainly did, but Ralph wasn't in the humor for saying so.

"All this is at your disposal, as well as freedom, if you will agree to go out West with me to-night," said the rascal.

"You can't bribe me that way," replied the boy firmly.

"Unless you agree to my proposition you get nothing to eat."

"All right, then, I don't eat."

"I see my words have no effect on you. I will leave the tray and see if the sight of the viands won't work a change in your resolution."

Thus speaking, Coddington turned on his heel and left the room. Ralph had a good appetite, as most healthy boys have, and the smoking hot breakfast was a sore temptation to him to try and make some compromise with his pretended uncle; but as he judged that no compromise would be considered by the rascal, he resolutely determined to grin and bear the sight of the food, which had been specially prepared to tempt his palate. As the food grew cold his appetite grew stronger. Still he had no intention of yielding. Coddington looked in and asked him if he would come to terms.

"No."

"You'll stay in that chair and get nothing to eat till you do," replied the rascal.

"All right," replied Ralph doggedly. "I'll stay here, then."

"You're a stubborn young scamp!" snarled Coddington, who was manifestly impatient to bring him to his knees.

"And you're a villainous old scamp!" retorted the boy.

Coddington slammed the door and vanished. He didn't come back, nor did the woman show herself. There were no sounds in the next room to indicate her presence there. Morning grew apace and still Ralph sat fastened to the heavy arm-chair. He grew hungrier with each hour, and though the food was stone cold he would have eaten it had he been able to reach it. At length the clock in the kitchen struck twelve.

"Gee! This is fierce!" ejaculated Ralph, giving the chair a kick to relieve his feelings.

Snap! The iron clamps disappeared as if by magic, and he was free. Ralph was too surprised to move for a moment or two. Then he realized that he had accidentally struck the spring in the leg of the chair which operated them. He sprang on his feet and went to the door through which Coddington had entered and left the room. Opening it, he passed into an entry with a stairway leading to the floor above. With a thrill of joy he rushed to the front door.

"It won't take me long to get out of here," he

muttered. "Then for a restaurant and Wall Street."

As he started for the door a key suddenly rattled in the lock. He had barely time to open the nearest door and enter the room into which he had been ushered the night before when the front door opened and admitted Coddington and Delacy Jones, the latter looking as swell as ever. As the footsteps approached the room in which he had taken refuge Ralph hastily crawled behind the horse-hair upholstered sofa. He was none too soon to avoid discovery, for in walked Coddington and his aristocratic conspirator.

"The boy is a prisoner in the room under this," said Coddington, as he invited Jones to be seated. "He is a stubborn little rascal, but I'll bring him to terms. Hunger is the greatest leveler under the sun. It has been known to tame animals, so why not a boy?"

The aristocratic rascal nodded, as if the idea struck him as being the proper caper.

"Would you like to see him in his helpless condition?" asked Coddington.

"I would, but I don't want him to see me."

"He need not see you. Enter yonder closet and hold the door ajar and I will fetch him up here."

Delancy Jones entered the closet and Coddington walked outside the door. There was a loud click, the trap in the floor shot back and presently up came—the empty chair, which rose high enough for the ends of the rug to clear the opening, and then settled down. Coddington re-entered the room and started back aghast when he saw that the chair was tenantless.

"He has escaped!" he roared with an imprecation.

Then he rushed from the room and dashed down stairs. He was gone about ten minutes, during which time Delancy Jones came from the closet and sat upon the very sofa behind which Ralph was hiding. When Coddington returned he was wild with rage.

"The young rascal managed to release himself from the chair. He must have hit the spring with his foot by accident. At any rate, he appears to be gone," he said.

"Has he left the house?"

"Looks as if he had, for he isn't downstairs anywhere, and it isn't likely he would go upstairs with the hall door before him."

"How could he get out of that door if it was locked?"

"That's so. He couldn't; but he could have made his escape through one of the front windows."

"Examine the windows and see if he left that way," said Delancy Jones.

Coddington left the room to do so.

"No, he didn't get out by way of the windows, for the catch is on both of them. He must have left by the rear."

"Go and see if he did."

Coddington went downstairs again, and when he got back he announced that the doors and windows were locked.

"I thought as much. You go off half-cocked always. Now, it is my opinion that the boy is in the house still," said Jones.

Ralph did not thank the aristocratic conspirator for the suggestion.

It might lead to a search of the house, in which

case there was every chance of him being discovered.

"I've looked everywhere that he was likely to be," replied Coddington.

"You haven't looked upstairs."

"He wouldn't go upstairs."

"How do you know he wouldn't?"

"Because he couldn't escape from the house that way."

"He could hide there until he found a chance to get away later on," said the astute Mr. Jones, producing and lighting a cigarette in his leisurely way.

The old man thought the point well taken, so he left the room to search the upper part of the house.

Ralph heard all that passed, and knowing that Coddington's hunt upstairs would amount to nothing, he began to consider whether the visitors would next suggest a search of the rooms on that floor.

As it was likely he would, for he seemed to be wide awake at all points, the boy knew that in the end he would be discovered.

Therefore he concluded that while Coddington was engaged upstairs it would now be the best time for him to make a break for liberty.

He would have to face the aristocratic conspirator, but one man was less formidable than two.

Delancy Jones still occupied the sofa, and Ralph, by reaching up his hand, could touch him.

"I must take him by surprise," he breathed.

He was figuring how he could do this when Jones got up, walked to the rear window and looked out on the back prospect.

He thus presented his back to the boy and the open door leading into the hall.

Here was an opportunity not to be neglected.

Ralph crawled from behind the sofa and slipped over to the door, which he almost closed.

At that moment Delancy Jones, finding nothing interesting in the vista of back yards, turned from the window and strode to the middle of the room, where he carelessly seated himself in the big arm-chair which had marked the undoing of the young messenger the previous evening.

Ralph heard him move and turned to see what he was about to do next.

With his eyes to the crack of the door the boy's left hand rested mechanically on the wall.

As Mr. Jones threw himself into the arm-chair Ralph's fingers encountered a brass plate set in the wall and he unconsciously pressed upon it as his weight leaned in that direction.

A sharp click resounded through the little sitting-room, the chair clamps automatically adjusted themselves to the aristocratic rascal's arms, and before he could realize what was on the tapis he and the chair were rapidly descending to the room below, just as the boy had performed the same trip the night previous.

CHAPTER XII.—Ralph Makes His Escape.

"Gee!" exclaimed Ralph, as the second trap closed the opening in the sitting-room floor. "He's pickled for fair, and to think that I worked the trick upon him without knowing it. This is the best joke out," and the boy chuckled with glee.

He was aroused from his state of satisfaction by

muttered. "Then for a restaurant and Wall Street."

As he started for the door a key suddenly rattled in the lock. He had barely time to open the nearest door and enter the room into which he had been ushered the night before when the front door opened and admitted Coddington and Delacy Jones, the latter looking as swell as ever. As the footsteps approached the room in which he had taken refuge Ralph hastily crawled behind the horse-hair upholstered sofa. He was none too soon to avoid discovery, for in walked Coddington and his aristocratic conspirator.

"The boy is a prisoner in the room under this," said Coddington, as he invited Jones to be seated. "He is a stubborn little rascal, but I'll bring him to terms. Hunger is the greatest leveler under the sun. It has been known to tame animals, so why not a boy?"

The aristocratic rascal nodded, as if the idea struck him as being the proper caper.

"Would you like to see him in his helpless condition?" asked Coddington.

"I would, but I don't want him to see me."

"He need not see you. Enter yonder closet and hold the door ajar and I will fetch him up here."

Delancy Jones entered the closet and Coddington walked outside the door. There was a loud click, the trap in the floor shot back and presently up came—the empty chair, which rose high enough for the ends of the rug to clear the opening, and then settled down. Coddington re-entered the room and started back aghast when he saw that the chair was tenantless.

"He has escaped!" he roared with an imprecation.

Then he rushed from the room and dashed down stairs. He was gone about ten minutes, during which time Delancy Jones came from the closet and sat upon the very sofa behind which Ralph was hiding. When Coddington returned he was wild with rage.

"The young rascal managed to release himself from the chair. He must have hit the spring with his foot by accident. At any rate, he appears to be gone," he said.

"Has he left the house?"

"Looks as if he had, for he isn't downstairs anywhere, and it isn't likely he would go upstairs with the hall door before him."

"How could he get out of that door if it was locked?"

"That's so. He couldn't; but he could have made his escape through one of the front windows."

"Examine the windows and see if he left that way," said Delancy Jones.

Coddington left the room to do so.

"No, he didn't get out by way of the windows, for the catch is on both of them. He must have left by the rear."

"Go and see if he did."

Coddington went downstairs again, and when he got back he announced that the doors and windows were locked.

"I thought as much. You go off half-cocked always. Now, it is my opinion that the boy is in the house still," said Jones.

Ralph did not thank the aristocratic conspirator for the suggestion.

It might lead to a search of the house, in which

case there was every chance of him being discovered.

"I've looked everywhere that he was likely to be," replied Coddington.

"You haven't looked upstairs."

"He wouldn't go upstairs."

"How do you know he wouldn't?"

"Because he couldn't escape from the house that way."

"He could hide there until he found a chance to get away later on," said the astute Mr. Jones, producing and lighting a cigarette in his leisurely way.

The old man thought the point well taken, so he left the room to search the upper part of the house.

Ralph heard all that passed, and knowing that Coddington's hunt upstairs would amount to nothing, he began to consider whether the visitors would next suggest a search of the rooms on that floor.

As it was likely he would, for he seemed to be wide awake at all points, the boy knew that in the end he would be discovered.

Therefore he concluded that while Coddington was engaged upstairs it would now be the best time for him to make a break for liberty.

He would have to face the aristocratic conspirator, but one man was less formidable than two.

Delancy Jones still occupied the sofa, and Ralph, by reaching up his hand, could touch him.

"I must take him by surprise," he breathed.

He was figuring how he could do this when Jones got up, walked to the rear window and looked out on the back prospect.

He thus presented his back to the boy and the open door leading into the hall.

Here was an opportunity not to be neglected.

Ralph crawled from behind the sofa and slipped over to the door, which he almost closed.

At that moment Delancy Jones, finding nothing interesting in the vista of back yards, turned from the window and strode to the middle of the room, where he carelessly seated himself in the big arm-chair which had marked the undoing of the young messenger the previous evening.

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He was aroused from his state of satisfaction by

the shouting of Delancy Jones in the room below.

"I haven't any time to lose," thought the young messenger. "Coddington is bound to hear the racket, and thinking his visitor has caught me he'll be downstairs in a hurry."

He made a rush for the hall door, but to his chagrin he saw that the key was not in the lock.

"I must get out by one of the front windows," he muttered.

He turned to the closed door on his right.

Just then Coddington, who had heard Delancy Jones's shouts, came to the head of the stairs.

He could not help seeing Ralph.

With a deep imprecation he dashed down the stairs.

The boy fled into the room and slammed the door.

Swinging a chair in front of it he darted for the nearest of the two windows.

Bang! Coddington pushed his way through the door with a rush that forced the chair aside.

"Stop, you young rascal! Stop, I say!" he cried, running at Ralph, who was in the act of throwing up the sash. Ralph saw that he would have to fight the matter out with his pretended uncle.

Turning quickly, as Coddington came at him with outstretched hands, he eluded his grasp and then struck the old man a blow on the jaw with his clenched fist.

Coddington staggered and fell against the window pane with such force that the glass was smashed with a racket that could be heard across the street.

Ralph took advantage of his chance to run to the other window, unlatch it, throw up the sash, force open the green shutters, and leap to the sidewalk.

Taken in connection with the noise made by the breaking of the glass, his action attracted attention from many in the neighborhood.

As he started up the street on the run several persons shouted, "Stop thief!" and ran after him.

The hue and cry was taken up by others, and soon a small mob was at his heels.

Ralph saw he was in a most unenviable position, but he didn't see that he could do anything better than keep on running.

He was a good runner and outstripped his pursuers.

Fortunately the policeman on that beat was not at hand to intercept him, and he skipped around one corner after another, entirely at sea as to where he was.

Suddenly he saw a restaurant sign ahead, and he decided to put in there on the chance of throwing the crowd behind off the scent.

He could hear them shouting along the adjacent side street, so he slackened his pace to a walk and then entered the small, cheap restaurant.

Taking a seat at a rear table, with his back to the door, he picked up a bill-of-fare to order his dinner.

As the waiter brought a glass of water the mob of pursuers attracted attention to the place as they rushed past the door.

At the next street corner the crowd met a policeman, to whom the facts were communicated, but as the pursued was not in sight, and the direction he was supposed to have taken was a problem the chase broke up at that point.

Ralph, congratulating himself on getting out

of his hobble, ordered a beautiful spread and ate it with a sharp appetite.

When he paid his bill and walked out of the restaurant the street was as tranquil as before the brief excitement, and no one who saw him dreamed for a moment that he was the cause of the late commotion.

It was not without some difficulty that Ralph finally connected with Hudson Street, for Greenwich Village is a kind of maze to a stranger.

From Hudson Street he easily made his way to the nearest Ninth Avenue elevated station and took a train for Rector Street.

It was nearly two o'clock when he finally walked into his office.

"What's the matter with you to-day, Ralph?" asked the cashier. "Been sick?"

"No, sir. Been up against hard luck. Is Mr. Snow in?"

"No; he's over at the Exchange."

"I suppose he was surprised to find me missing this morning?"

"Naturally. Johnson, who is performing your duties, has instructions to call at your lodgings after business hours to find out what was the matter with you."

"I'll explain matters to Mr. Snow when he comes in, and my explanation will be perfectly satisfactory."

It was quarter past three when Mr. Snow came back to the office. Ralph was in at the time and he hastened to present himself before his boss and explain the cause of his late appearance at the office that day. The boy's story greatly astonished the broker.

"Have you notified the police about the matter, Ralph?"

"No, sir."

"You should have done so without delay. Then your rascally so-called uncle would probably have been arrested. As it is several hours since you made your escape, it is likely he has taken time by the forelock and gone into hiding somewhere. Who was this other man you have mentioned?"

"I couldn't tell you; but I'd give a whole lot to find out his name and where he lives," replied the young messenger.

"Could you point out the street and house where you were held a prisoner all night?"

"I'm afraid not. I left in such a hurry that I had no chance to take note of anything. All I know is that the street is somewhere in the Greenwich Village district."

"This matter ought to be investigated by the authorities. A house fitted with a mechanical chair, working up and down through a trap in the floor, ought to be looked into. Robbery, if not murder, could easily be committed under such circumstances. This man Coddington must be a pretty hard rascal, when he is able to use the facilities of such a house to carry out his own plans."

"Yes, sir, I guess he is. It seems strange that during the many years I have lived with him I never suspected him as being crooked."

"He must have a strong object in wanting to take you West with him."

"It would seem so," replied Ralph evasively, for he did not want to confide the real facts of the case yet even to his employer.

Finally Mr. Snow called up Police Headquar-

ters on the phone and told the man there the circumstances of Ralph's night abduction, and what had happened afterward. The officer replied that the boy had better come up to Mulberry Street and tell his story in person. Accordingly Ralph started for Police Headquarters. He was taken into the office of the chief of detectives, who listened to his story and then asked him a lot of questions.

"Would you be able to identify the well-dressed man again if you saw him?"

Ralph said he would.

"The chief rascal, you say, claims to be your uncle?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure he isn't your uncle?"

"Yes."

"But you lived with him twelve years," said the inspector, looking at the boy sharply, as if he considered that fact rather suspicious, considering the reputation he was now giving the man. "Do you mean to tell me that during all that time you never noticed anything shady about him?"

"I never suspected that he was other than he represented himself."

"You look like an uncommonly bright boy, and yet your statement almost belies your appearance. When did you learn that Coddington was not your uncle?"

"About three weeks ago, and then I left him."

"How did you find the fact out?"

That was something Ralph didn't want to explain, but he knew he must make some kind of a statement, so he told the officer that during an interview he overheard between Coddington and his swell-looking visitor the fact came out that the old man was not his uncle.

"What was his object, do you suppose, for pretending to be your uncle?"

That was another question Ralph felt obliged to parry, so he said he guessed Coddington's object was to live off his wages.

"Give me the street and number of the house where you last lived with this man," said the inspector.

Ralph did so.

"I'm going to send a plain-clothes man out with you. He will take you over to the Greenwich district to see if you can find the street and house which figured in your adventure."

The inspector rang for one of his detectives. He took the man aside, gave him certain instructions and then introduced him to the young messenger. The detective and Ralph then left Headquarters together. They traversed that part of Greenwich Village which Ralph thought the most familiar to his recollection until it became dark, but without success. So they had to give the matter up, for the time being, at any rate. The detective then took the boy to the Tenth Precinct station-house on McDougal Street. There he told his story to the captain, after which he was allowed to go.

CHAPTER XIII.—Ralph Does a Great Service to a Fascinating Girl.

During the next week things went as usual with Ralph. The market began to look up again, and as it did R. & S., in which he was so heavily

interested, began to rise slowly. Every point it advanced represented \$800 profit to him, and you may be sure he watched its ascent with great satisfaction. He had been summoned once more to Police Headquarters and put through a stiff examination by the inspector, but he acquitted himself so well that the officer's suspicions were lulled. What the police were doing, if anything, in the matter, he could not learn, but he hoped they would be able to discover the identity of the aristocratic conspirator, even if they failed to catch Coddington. The authorities would no doubt have been able to round up Delancy Jones had Ralph told all he knew about that individual's real connection with the case. So the arch conspirator continued to seek his usual haunts unmolested, while Coddington had betaken himself to New Jersey for safety's sake.

Thus the days passed and Ralph heard no more from the police. His interest in his new deal occupied the greater part of his thoughts now, for he was figuring on making big money this time with 800 shares at his back. As the market continued to stiffen, so his hopes grew brighter, and when he came downtown one morning R. & S. was quoted at 75, or thirteen points higher than he had paid for it. That day it commenced to boom earnest amid great excitement, and for the next two days little else seemed to occupy the attention of the Exchange but the phenomenal jump in R. & S. Altogether the market hadn't been livelier in months, and when the stock got up to 85 Ralph concluded that it was time for him to quit before the boom stopped, which was likely to happen at any moment.

Accordingly he managed to get his selling order in at the little bank, and his 800 shares were disposed of at a profit to him of a little over \$18,000, which made him worth \$26,000. As soon as he collected what was coming to him, and his mind was easy once more, he recommenced his hunt for a clue to the identity of the man who was the cause of his banishment from a luxurious home, a loving mother's care, and the riches that belonged to him by right. Several weeks passed, however, before he saw Delancy Jones again. Then he caught a momentary view of him in a swiftly moving automobile. That was on a Sunday afternoon when he had gone to Central Park to pass away the time, for now that the early days of June had come around he did not care to lounge in his room at the lodging-house. Ralph watched the man with the drooping mustache speed by with feelings of some resentment, for he felt that the gentlemanly rascal was spreading himself on money that did not rightfully belong to him. After watching Delancy Jones out of sight he crossed the roadway and soon came to a bridle path.

He was about to cross this also when he saw coming toward him at headlong speed a black mare, ridden by a young lady who had clearly lost control of her mount. Ralph, taking in the situation at a glance, like the plucky fellow he was, jumped into the center of the path and swinging his arms and dancing about tried to bring the frightened animal to a stop. The mare shied to one side, which brought her close to the hedge, between which and the boy she tried to dart. As she passed Ralph sprang up at a great risk to himself, caught the bridle with one hand and threw his other arm around her neck, lifting him-

self up by sheer muscular effort. His weight and the fact that her movements were hampered by the hedge caused the mare to lose her speed, and she slowed down quickly until at the end of a hundred yards she came to a full stop. Ralph then lowered himself to the ground and grabbed the bridle with both of his hands and began to speak soothingly to the animal. This method calmed her restiveness. The young lady had in the meanwhile sprung from the saddle and now came forward.

"I am ever so much obliged to you," she said to Ralph in a sweet voice that was full of gratitude. "Bess was running away with me, and I don't know what might have happened to me but for your courageous action. You might have been seriously injured, too, in coming to my rescue. I trust you will believe that I am deeply grateful to you."

The young lady was about sixteen, and as Ralph gazed into her lovely face he recognized her at once as the daughter of the Honorable Mr. Grove.

"Don't mention it, Miss Grove. I am happy to have been able to do you a service."

"You know me!" exclaimed the girl with a look of surprise. "I do not remember ever meeting you before. May I ask your name?"

"My name is Ralph Roy. You have not met me, but I saw you the night you lost your diamond ornament getting into the carriage in front of Sherry's with your father and mother. I found your ornament in the gutter where the carriage had stood, and I returned it to your father on the following day. I did not expect him to reward me, at least not so handsomely as he did, so you see my service to you this afternoon will kind of square matters in my own estimation."

"So you are the boy who was so honest as to return that ornament?" she said. "I was sorry that I didn't see you when you came to our house so as to add my thanks to my father's, but I will do so now. That service, however, was a very small one in comparison to what you have just done for me. I am sure I shall never forget the obligation you have placed me under in stopping Bess, and maybe saving my life."

"That's all right. I didn't do any more than the occasion called for. You were in danger, and it was my duty to try and save you if I could," replied Ralph politely.

"But I am sure very few persons would have taken the risk you did in behalf of a stranger. I appreciate your courage very much indeed, and I know my parents will also."

"Well, Miss Grove, as your mare seems all right now shall I assist you into the saddle?"

"Thank you. I shall be ever so much obliged if you will. But first you will give me your address, will you not?"

"Certainly, if you wish it. My business address will do, I suppose. I will write it down for you."

He took one of his employer's cards from his pocket and wrote his name across the back of it.

"Thank you," she said, putting the card in the bosom of her habit.

Ralph helped her into the saddle, and with a wave of her hand and a captivating smile she was off at a canter.

CHAPTER XIV.—Ralph's Biggest Deal.

On the following day about noon, when Ralph returned from one of his errands, the cashier handed him an envelope which he said had been left for him by a messenger. Tearing it open, he took out a lithographed letter heading bearing the name of George Grove, at No. — Wall Street. It stated that Mr. Grove would be happy to have him call at his office between the hours of three and four that afternoon.

"Wants to thank me for saving his daughter, I suppose," thought Ralph. "Well, I can't say that I'm stuck on being thanked and praised twice over for what I couldn't help doing. It's all very nice, but it makes me feel awkward. However, I suppose I'll have to call. It wouldn't be just right for me to ignore such a request."

So when he got off work for the day he went around to call on Mr. Grove. The Congressman welcomed Ralph in a genial way and lost no time in expressing his gratitude for the service the young messenger had rendered his daughter. He told Ralph that if there was any way in which he could be of service to him he hoped the boy would not hesitate to call upon him. After some further talk the interview ended and the boy went home. About a week later Ralph ran across Miss Grove on upper Broadway as she and her mother were getting into their carriage after a visit to a jewelry store. The girl saw him as he came along and stopped him.

"I am delighted to meet you again," she said, smiling. "Mother, this is Mr. Ralph Roy, the boy who saved me in the park that Sunday when Bess took fright at something she saw in the path."

Mrs. Grove said she was glad to have the opportunity of thanking him for that service to her daughter.

"He is the same boy who returned that valuable diamond ornament I lost after leaving Sherry's," said Miss Grove.

A brief conversation followed, and then Ralph bade them good-afternoon. A few days afterward Ralph learned, from a conversation he accidentally overheard between a big operator and one of his brokers, that a powerful combine of capitalists had formed a pool to corner a certain stock called O. & L., and boom it as far above its normal standing as they could force it. As there seemed to be no doubt as to the ability of such a combination of capital doing just what the operator stated, the young messenger determined to go the whole hog once more and take the chances of his run of luck continuing. So he went to the little bank and left an order for the purchase of 5,000 shares of O. & L. at the market price, which was 90, and put up a margin of \$25,000.

On the following Sunday afternoon Ralph paid his second visit to old Mr. Harding, after notifying him in advance by letter of his intention. He received a cordial reception, and this time he was introduced to Mrs. Delancy Jones. Of course Ralph did not dream that this fine-looking lady was the wife of the gentlemanly rascal who had defrauded him out of his inheritance. He was close on the discovery once when the old gentleman thought of showing him Mr. Jones's picture, but something prevented him doing so. At this interview Mr. Harding made an arrangement

with him to call soon again, when he promised to take him around to the home of his daughter-in-law.

Ralph felt that he was getting an introduction into pretty swell society through the old gentleman whose acquaintance he had accidentally made in Battery Park. Another week passed, during which his new deal had given him one or two attacks of heart failure by dropping within dangerous proximity to the wiping-out point. Fortunately for Ralph the actual danger line was not touched, though it was so nearly reached that the margin clerk of the little bank had prepared a notice calling for additional margin from him, which, however, was not sent because the price rose a couple of points before the letter was mailed. It was undoubtedly his Wall Street luck that saved him at the eleventh hour. He had a second scare toward the end of the week, but it was not quite as bad as the first one. After that the price went up again, and on Monday was five points above what he had paid for it.

On Tuesday afternoon, while he was carrying a rush message to an Exchange Place broker, and was in the act of entering one of the elevators of the building, he caught a glimpse of Delancy Jones coming out of the next cage with a gentleman.

Before Ralph recovered from his surprise he was being carried rapidly up the shaft to the floor he was bound for.

"I seem to be having hard luck with that man," he muttered. "I've run across him nearly a dozen times altogether, and yet I'm no nearer knowing who he is than I was at the start. I must do better than this or I'll never be able to find out my mother and recover my riches. I must try some other method. I think after I have put my present deal through I'll hire a detective. I hate, though, to give my private history away to a stranger. Maybe it would be better for me to confide in old Mr. Harding. He seems to have taken a great fancy to me, and I'm bound to say that I never met any one I felt more drawn to. I came very near telling him my story the last time I was at his house. I am sure he would sympathize with me, and do all he could to aid me in recovering my proper position in the world. As he moves in the best society, it seems to me he would be the proper one for me to confide in. I should not be at all surprised if he knows the gentleman with the drooping mustache well."

Ralph delivered his message at the broker's office and then returned to his own place of business. Glancing at the ticker, he noticed that O. & L. had jumped up two points since the opening of the Exchange that morning.

"Well, \$10,000 is a nice little wad to make in one day. That represents about twenty-two years' wages at my present salary. Gosh, if my luck keeps on I'll get rich on my own hook, and I won't need what's coming to me. Even if I recover my own riches soon it will be a whole lot of satisfaction to me to know that I have made a good-sized wad without any one's help. It makes a fellow feel independent to earn his own money."

Next day O. & L. was more active than ever. It kept on advancing all day, and finally closed at 105. On the following morning a concerted movement was made against it by a powerful bear clique, and intense excitement ensued in the

board-room. It developed into a battle for the mastery of the market between giants. Up and down the price surged, ranging during the day between par and 110. The day ended with a drawn battle between the opposing forces. Ralph wanted to sell out several times, but was unable to find a chance to get to the little bank. When he got off it was too late for him to leave his order, and so his deal went over until the next day. The fight continued as fiercely as ever next day, but the bulls seemed to have the best of the situation. The price went up to 109, at which point it closed.

Ralph didn't get any opportunity to sell that day, either, but he reached the little bank in time to arrange to have his shares sold the first thing in the morning. His holdings were closed at 110 and a fraction, and he cleared \$100,000 on the deal.

When he got his check he was worth \$125,000 altogether.

CHAPTER XV.—Ralph In the Toils Once More.

It was about this time that Delancy Jones received the second shock of his life in connection with the boy he had treated so infamously. He was seated in his library, reading the afternoon paper when his uncle, Mr. Harding, entered the room. Mrs. Jones had incidentally told her husband about the boy who had called on Sunday about ten days previously. Mr. Jones paid little attention to the circumstance, as he did not dream that the boy was the victim he had so long conspired successfully against. He happened to think about the matter when the old gentleman appeared this day and casually asked him who the boy was whose acquaintance he had made, and whom he had introduced to Mrs. Jones.

"He's one of the nicest boys I ever met," replied the old gentleman enthusiastically. "I took a liking for him on account of his astonishing resemblance to my son, your cousin, when he was of the same age."

Delancy started and looked greatly disturbed.

"What is his name?" he asked hoarsely.

"Ralph Roy," replied Mr. Harding.

Delancy Jones gave a gasp of consternation.

"I would like you to meet him, Delancy," continued the old gentleman, not observing his nephew's agitation. "You are sure to like him, for he is a very nice boy indeed. He is employed in Wall Street as messenger for a broker named Snow. He told me that his parents are dead, and that until recently he was living with a man named Coddington, who claimed to be his uncle, but whom he says he left when he found out that he was a great rascal."

"What else did he tell you?" asked Delancy Jones feverishly.

"Nothing else, except that he has been quite successful in some deals he made in the stock market. He is coming here next Wednesday evening, and I am going to take him over and introduce him to Clarice."

"Good gracious!" groaned his nephew, his face turning ashen.

"What's the matter, Delancy?" asked the old gentleman, starting up in some alarm at the look on his nephew's face. "Are you ill?"

"No—yes. A sudden attack of the heart. I'm

subject to a spell once in a while," replied Delancy Jones, wiping the perspiration from his face with a trembling hand.

"Why, I never heard you complain about your heart before," said his uncle anxiously. "I hope it is nothing serious. You have seen a doctor, of course. What does he think about it?"

"He says I must avoid strong excitement."

"Of course—of course. What could have brought on this attack?"

"I don't know. Maybe your reference to this boy you were speaking about looking so like my dead cousin agitated me. Howard and I were boon companions, you know, while he lived, and I felt his death very keenly," fluttered Mr. Jones.

"True. You and my son were greatly attached to each other. I remember you took full charge of his son, my dead grandchild, when he was taken down with that terrible disease, and you did all you could to save him; but the Lord willed it otherwise," and the old gentleman shook his head at the sad remembrance.

Delancy Jones got up, went to a small closet in the wall where he kept his private stock of liquors under lock and key, poured himself out a stiff glass of cognac and drank it off. He returned to his chair with a flush of color in his face, but nevertheless he did not look well.

"Don't say anything to my wife about this," he said, "and if I were you I would not introduce that boy to Clarice, at least not yet awhile. If he looks like his father the sight might give her a shock, for she has never fully gotten over Howard's death."

"Well," said his uncle reflectively, "perhaps you are right. Clarice is going to Southampton in a few days for the season. I will defer the introduction until after she returns."

"That's right," answered Delancy Jones, breathing easier. "I think a great deal of Clarice, and I wouldn't like to have her pleasure for the summer spoiled by the revival of painful remembrances."

As soon as his uncle retired his countenance changed.

"What infernal luck! The bare idea of my uncle being in touch with that boy gives me the cold shivers. Something must be done at once in order to get that boy out of this city and far away. I must see Coddington right away. Perhaps he can manage to get him kidnaped to sea if he can't get him out West. At any rate, the situation is critical, and I cannot afford to take any more chances."

He wrote out a brief telegraph message addressed to John Codd, No. — River Street, Jersey City, called a messenger and sent it to be forwarded.

On Wednesday evening Ralph called on old Mr. Harding according to arrangement, and was shown up into the sitting-room, where he received the usual friendly greeting from the old gentleman. After a short talk Mr. Harding told him that he was sorry that circumstances had transpired which would prevent him from affording Ralph the promised introduction to his daughter-in-law until after her return from the seashore. Ralph was not greatly disappointed, as he had not the slightest suspicion that the lady in question was his mother. Mr. Harding, who had made the engagement with his dead son's wife, had gone over that afternoon and told her

that it was not convenient for the boy to meet her until some later date. She had no particular feeling in the matter either, as she had no idea that Ralph was the son she had mourned as dead for so many years, until the seeress with the crystal globe had aroused a train of doubt and suspicion in her mind.

As the detective she had employed had been unable to throw any light on the fortune teller's statements so far her doubts and suspicions were beginning to subside, a fact that Delancy Jones noticed with in tense satisfaction.

Mr. Jones, having made an appointment with Jabez Coddington, met the rascal at the specified rendezvous in Jersey City. Knowing that Ralph was to call at his (Jones's) residence, the arch conspirator suggested to Coddington that the chance to capture the boy when he left the house ought to be a good one. Coddington, from past experience, was not over sanguine of success, but Jones produced \$1,000 and told him to spend it freely in securing immediate results, so the lure of the money overcame his nervous scruples, and he entered greedily into the project. He had several days in which to make his arrangements, and by Wednesday afternoon he had prepared a plan that he thought would work. When Ralph went to call on Mr. Harding he was followed by Coddington in disguise. After the boy entered the house the rascal was joined by a couple of accomplices who drove up in an old moving-van, the sides and roof of which were formed out of canvas. It was drawn by a team of stout horses, and was rather an odd spectacle to be seen hovering around such an aristocratic thoroughfare as East — street near Fifth avenue.

Under Coddington's directions the vehicle moved around the neighborhood for an hour, and then came to a stop near the house which Ralph had entered. As an excuse for its presence the three men made a bluff of repairing one of its axles. When nine o'clock came Ralph bade Mr. Harding good-by, and left the house.

"Hey, young feller," said one of the men at the wagon, "give us a hand, will you?"

"What's the matter?" asked Ralph unsuspectingly.

"The wagon has broken down and we're tryin' to fix 'er up. Jump inside, will you, and hand out a small sledge-hammer you'll find there near the seat."

Ralph was an accommodating boy and willingly complied with the request. He sprang into the vehicle and walked forward. Suddenly from under a bundle of rags a man's form rose up, threw himself on the boy and bore him to the bottom of the wagon. Ralph was taken by surprise, but quickly recovering began to struggle with his assailant, who by this time had all the advantage of the situation. A handkerchief that gave off a pungent odor was pressed over his face, and as he breathed in the odor his struggles grew weaker and weaker, until they ceased altogether. The man, who was Coddington, then removed the handkerchief and saw that the boy was unconscious.

"Good. Everything is working out right," he muttered with great satisfaction.

He dragged Ralph to the bunch of rags and threw him upon it. Then he went to the rear of the wagon and directed his two accomplices to get on the seat and drive off. They hastened

to obey, and presently the vehicle was making off toward the East River.

CHAPTER XVI.—Conclusion.

The wagon crossed the river by the Ninety-second street ferry, which landed it in Astoria. The driver laid a course to the suburbs of the place, and then took the road eastward.

Coddington remained all the time in the wagon to keep his eye on the senseless boy. The wagon jogged on nearly all night, and as daylight began to break the vehicle entered an old disused lane, and drove up to a lonesome looking farmhouse that had been tenantless for some years. Coddington had rented it for the summer at a small figure, though he only intended to make use of it for a week or two. Opening the kitchen door his two accomplices bore Ralph into the house and up to a mouldy-looking garret, where they left him on a bed of rags that had been prepared for his reception. The door was then locked on him and Coddington and his companions went below. The men had been gone perhaps half an hour, and the early rays of the morning sun were shining through the interstices of the shutters, when Ralph came to his senses. He was astonished at finding himself in such strange quarters, and it was some moments before he realized what had happened to him. Then he knew he had been kidnaped again, and he did not doubt that Coddington was at the bottom of the matter.

"I walked into that trap like a chump, and now I'm up against it for fair. I dare say that old rascal will take extra care that I don't give him the slip this time. I wonder where he has carried me?"

He rose from the heap of rags and went to one of the windows. A broken slat in the shutter enabled him to get a fair view of the surroundings, and he saw that he had been taken to some place in the country. His first impression was that the locality was New Jersey, and it wasn't until later on that he learned he was out on Long Island. He tried the windows and found they had been nailed up with about an inch of space at the top for ventilation. There was not a bit of furniture in the attic—nothing but the bed of rags and an empty box. He tried the door and was not surprised to find it was locked.

"I wonder what Coddington expects to gain by keeping me a prisoner here? I'll never yield to him as long as I stand on two feet. I hope this job will land him in jail, where he ought to have been ever since his last outrage on me. I'll do my best to put them there now, for I'm sick of his tactics. I'm worth over \$100,000, and I'll spend a good bit of that to put a stop to his rascalities."

Two hours passed before Ralph heard any sound in the house, then there were steps on the stairs. The door opened and Coddington looked in with a grin of triumph on his homely features.

"I've got you again, Ralph Roy," he said with his familiar chuckle. "You see there isn't any use of trying to shake me off. This time you won't get away as easily as you did before. This time you'll stay here till you give in."

"I'll never give in," replied Ralph doggedly.

"You only think you won't; but you will when you wake up to the fact that you're caged strong and fast."

"I don't want to talk to a rascal like you."

"You used to like to talk to me once."

"That was before I knew you in your true colors. You ought to be in Sing Sing prison."

The rascal grinned sardonically.

"Are you hungry?" he asked.

"None of your business whether I am or not."

"I'm not going to starve you this time. You'll be fed while you remain here. If you refuse to go West with me of your own accord, you may go somewhere else without your consent, so I advise you to think well before you turn my offer down."

As Ralph made no reply, and did not seem to be in a communicative mood, the rascal shut the door and went downstairs. In the course of another hour he was back with a tough looking companion, who carried a tray of food. This was left on the floor inside the door, and then Coddington and his associate retired. As Ralph was hungry he ate the breakfast prepared for him, since he saw nothing was to be gained by letting it go to waste. He was left alone until late in the afternoon, when his dinner was brought to him, and Coddington told him that was all he would get till the next morning. Night came on and he wondered if he would have another visit from Coddington. The hours passed away and the house remained as silent as the grave.

Ralph had prowled over the attic during the afternoon to see if there was any other way of getting out except by the door. There appeared to be none. Coddington had evidently seen to it that no loophole was left to afford him a means of escape. As the boy considered his position while he lay on the bed of rags in the darkness he grew kind of desperate at his enforced imprisonment.

"This is the biggest kind of an outrage," he muttered. "It's bad enough for those scoundrels to defraud me out of a home and a fortune, but to follow me up in this way is past bearing. If I can only get out of this I'll have no mercy on Coddington, nor on that aristocratic rascal either. I'll send them both to Sing Sing prison if it costs me every dollar I own to do so."

In his anger he gave the unfinished wall against which his bed lay a vicious kick. Something gave way with a clatter. Ralph sat up, struck a match and looked to see what damage he had done. He saw a square hole in the wall, and on looking closer he saw he had kicked out a movable panel which afforded communication with the other half of the attic. Ralph lost no time in crawling through. Lighting another match, he found that there was a door to this part also. He tried it and it opened freely, letting him out on a landing opposite the other door, in which he saw the key on the outside of the lock.

"This is where I get away, and as soon as I do, the Lord help my enemies, that's all I've got to say," muttered Ralph resolutely.

He removed his shoes and glided down to the next landing and thence on until he got to the ground floor. He saw a light shining under a door and heard the sound of conversation in the room. Looking through the keyhole, he saw

Coddington and two hard-looking young men seated at a table playing cards. Ralph slipped into another room, which was bare of furniture. Going to one of the windows he slipped the latch, opened it softly and dropped out. Putting on his shoes he looked around in the starlit night.

"This will probably take me to the road," he thought, and he followed it.

He was right in his surmise—the lane ended at the road. Not knowing which was the best direction for him to take, he started off at random, and half an hour's walking brought him to a small village. Walking into the main room of a small hotel he asked the first man he saw whereabouts he was. The man looked at him in surprise.

"Why, don't you know?" he asked in surprise.

"No, I don't. I was brought here last night and locked up in the attic of a farmhouse down the road. I was unconscious at the time, so I have no idea where I am. I wish you'd tell me."

"You're in B——, Long Island."

"Gee! I thought I was in New Jersey."

"What do you mean by saying you were brought here last night unconscious and locked up in the attic of a farmhouse?"

"Just what I said. Can you tell me where I can find the police station?"

"What do you want with the police? I'm the head constable."

"Then you'll do. Listen and I'll tell you the facts of my case; then I want you to get some others and go back with me to that house and arrest the rascals who kidnaped me," said Ralph in a tone that commanded the attention of the constable.

Ralph told his story, and the result was he went back to the house with the constable and a posse, and took Coddington and his two pals completely by surprise. They were locked up in the village jail and Ralph took a night's lodging at the hotel. Ralph appeared against them next morning when they were brought before the justice, and they were held pending instructions from New York.

The young messenger went straight to Police Headquarters when he reached the city and told his story to the chief of detectives. Officers were sent to B—— at once to bring the men to Manhattan. Ralph reached his office at noon, and of course had a long story to tell his employer.

"I think this thing has gone far enough," said Mr. Snow. "Now that you've got one of the rascals I'd not let up on him till he gets what's coming to him."

"I don't mean to," replied the boy.

That night he called on Mr. Harding, and the story he had to tell about his abduction astonished the old gentleman not a little. Then Ralph confided the rest of his story to him, and the old gentleman was fairly staggered at the possibility of the boy being his grandson. He took him over to the home of his daughter-in-law, and the moment the lady saw Ralph she was impressed by the likeness he bore his father. The boy told his story again, and Mrs. Howard Harding declared that Ralph was her own dear son—Howard Harding, Jr. Ralph's description of Delancy Jones was so exact that there could be no doubt about his connection with the case. To make sure of the matter Mr. Harding said he would

bring his nephew and Ralph face to face. Next day Delancy Jones was confronted with Ralph Roy, now Howard Harding, and he threw up the sponge, admitting his guilt and throwing himself on the mercy of his victim and the boy's mother.

He agreed to yield up all his ill-gotten fortune, which he had acquired through the will of Howard Harding, Sr., who left the money to him in the event of his son's death, after suitably providing for his wife, and thus the boy who has figured in these pages as Ralph Roy came into his riches at last.

As for Jabez Coddington, he was tried and convicted and got a long term in Sing Sing.

Ralph spent that summer with his mother at Southampton, where he was introduced into society, and where also to his great satisfaction, he found Ada Grove summering with her parents.

They spent a large portion of their time together and enjoyed every moment of it.

In the fall Ralph returned to Mr. Snow's office as a junior clerk, and as his ambition was to become a stock broker, he devoted his time and attention to learning the ropes.

He did no more speculating on the side, being perfectly satisfied with the success he had already achieved in that line.

In due time Mr. Snow made him his board-room representative, and two years later he opened up as a full-fledged broker.

His engagement to the daughter of Mr. Grove was announced in the society intelligence, and a year later they were married.

He is a wealthy man today, honored and respected by a large circle of friends, but the greatest satisfaction he has is the remembrance of his astonishing run of Wall Street luck.

Next week's issue will contain "A CASTAWAY'S FORTUNE; or, THE HUNT FOR A PIRATE'S GOLD."

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Charlie Cooper's Curves

or

THE STAR PLAYER OF THE UNKNOWN NINE

By Gaston Garne

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued)

Butts had about a hundred dollars in his pocket, which he had saved for a rainy day out of that his villainous employer had given him from time to time.

"I reckon it's New York fur yours truly!" he exclaimed, as he finally left the car at the railroad depot. "Binghamton ain't swift enough fur me."

The villain found that he could not get a through train for New York until after ten o'clock that night, so he took a train to Scranton and got off there.

Here he visited a barber shop and got fixed up a little.

His clothes were at the hotel in Binghamton, but he cared little about them, as he had a hundred dollars, and that was a great deal more than he had ever possessed at one time before he met Neville, or George Orris, as his right name was.

Bill Butts arrived at Hoboken the next morning, feeling pretty safe.

He ate his breakfast in a restaurant and then took a boat for New York.

He did not go over with the passengers from the train because he thought it possible that detectives might be watching for him.

Butts knew where the office of Orris was, and somehow he felt as though he must go there and see what was going on.

The feeling came upon him so strongly that he gave way to it and made his way there the following morning, which was Monday.

He did not attempt to go into the building, though, but simply hung around and wondered how much money was being made for Orris there.

When he had been standing near the door of the office building for perhaps ten minutes a well-dressed stranger, accompanied by a good-looking woman of forty, and a keen-visaged man, whom Butts took for a detective right away, stepped into the vestibule of the building and looked over the list of names of the occupants of the offices.

Butts watched them, and when he saw the gentleman's finger stop at the name of George Orris he wondered what was up.

The party of three took the elevator and went up.

Bill Butts was so interested now that he waited for them to come back.

"If that gent don't resemble Charlie Cooper, ther baseball pitcher, I ain't a judge of looks!" the villain muttered under his breath. "I wonder what he is looking fur Orris fur?"

As the three came out he heard the man who had led the way in say in a disappointed tone of voice:

"I'd give a hundred dollars to know where he

is. I want this matter settled up quickly. I don't want him to go to jail, but I'm going to have my rights."

"Excuse me," exclaimed Butts, acting on an impulse and stepping forward. "Is it George Orris you're lookin' fur?"

"Yes," was the quick reply, and then both men and the woman looked at him keenly.

"Well, I learned from a clerk that he was in Binghamton yisterday. You see, he owes me some money, an' I want ter see him bad. That's what I'm hangin' around here fur."

"Binghamton!" spoke up the lady in surprise. "Why, that is where the Unknown Nine played ball Saturday, isn't it, John?"

"Yes, my dear," was the reply. "We will start for Binghamton at once, then, for we are following Charlie up to give him the greatest surprise he ever had. Here is a five-dollar bill, my friend. If we find the man we are looking for in Binghamton you shall have more. Here is my card."

"I guess you need not pay this man anything, Mr. Cooper," spoke up the other gentleman. "I will take charge of him. He is wanted for trying to murder your son. I know him from the description. He made the mistake of his life when he came here to hang around the office of his employer."

Before Bill Butts hardly realized it a pair of steel bracelets were on his wrists and he was being marched away by the detective.

CHAPTER XXIII

Charlie Finds His Long-Lost Father

George Orris was not long in being taken to the lock-up in Binghamton.

He had been caught when he least expected it, and it was all on account of Ben Spikes being shrewd enough to penetrate his disguise.

He gave his name as Neville, and neither Fred Roberts nor our hero contradicted it just then.

The villain was arrested on the charge of having hired a scoundrel to put the young ball player out of the way, and there was enough evidence to hold him without bail.

But when Ben Spikes testified and swore he was the man who shot him in Yonkers, that put a different aspect on it all, and the prisoner was sent to Yonkers the following day to await trial for attempted murder.

Roberts had arranged to play the Buffalo team on their own grounds the next Saturday, while the Wednesday before that they were to play at Syracuse.

But late Saturday night he got word that the Syracuse game had to be cancelled until a couple of weeks later, so he decided to take the boys straight to Buffalo.

They started Sunday afternoon, Charlie being satisfied that he was now pretty safe from his would-be murderers.

And so he was, for they were both in jail, though he had no idea where Bill Butts was.

The automobiles were not hurried much, so they did not reach Buffalo until Thursday noon.

Their fame had got there ahead of them, and the game was well advertised, both by posters and through the newspapers.

Strange as it may seem, the Unknowns were the favorites in the betting.

Roberts shook his head when he heard this.

"Buffalo is a very sporty town," said he, "and I am afraid it will be a case of giving odds. The men here generally wager their money according to their judgment, and not because they are loyal to their team."

They had not been in Buffalo more than an hour when Charlie Cooper was surprised to see his mother, dressed in very fine clothes, come into the hotel.

With her was a good-looking man with a short beard.

"Mother!" cried the boy, as he rushed to embrace her.

The good woman burst into tears as she felt her son's strong arms clasped about her neck.

"Charlie!" she cried, hysterically; "here is your long-lost father!"

The star player of the Unknown Nine gently led his mother to a chair and then turned and looked at the man in a dazed way.

"I am your father, Charlie Cooper," said the stranger slowly. "I am proud to know that I have such a manly-looking son!"

He held open his arms, and the boy did not hesitate to embrace him.

Explanations followed, which, briefly summed up, were as follows:

When John Cooper was drugged and taken aboard the ship at New York he went to China with it.

He had to work his way as a landsman, and was not allowed to send a communication from any port the ship stopped at.

He had been shanghaied, and hence it was a hard life that he led on the voyage to China.

Arriving at Hong Kong, he went ashore and was about to mail a letter to his wife when he was seized as a suspect and locked up for having robbed an English banking house.

In vain did he declare his innocence. He looked like the guilty man, and so he was sent to prison to serve twenty years at hard labor.

All this had happened fifteen years before the opening of our story.

John Cooper had escaped from the prison after he had served ten years and fled to the interior.

He sent several letters to his wife, but they must have been intercepted by George Orris, his half-brother, for she never received them.

He had a hard struggle to exist for the next five years, but fortune smiled upon him at last, and he became a very rich man through the discovery of a gold mine in Thibet.

He had given up his wife and boy as dead, but when he finally found himself in possession of enough wealth to live comfortably for the rest of his life he decided to leave the Orient and come to America.

This he did as soon as it was practicable for him to leave.

He arrived in New York the Friday before the great ball game at Binghamton and went at once to his old home.

He was overjoyed to find that his wife and child and mother were alive and well, and the welcome he got can better be imagined than described.

When he had learned of how his half-brother had defrauded him of his legacy from England, and how he had hired a man to kill him, he wept, for he had not thought the man could be guilty of such a fearful crime.

He at length decided to see George Orris and give him a chance to flee to some other land and begin life over again.

When he heard about Charlie, and read the letters he sent regularly to his mother, it was decided that they should follow up the ball team and give the boy the biggest surprise of his life.

"I shan't interfere with the games he has agreed to play for his manager," he said.

He went to the office of his half-brother in New York, as has been stated, and what resulted there made him change his mind about giving George Orris a chance to leave the country and begin life anew, for Bill Butts made a clean breast of everything and agreed to turn State's evidence against Orris when the trial came up.

Of course the Yonkers affair had to be settled first, and by the time Orris got through he would have imprisonment for life staring him in the face.

"Well, Charlie, my boy," said his father the next morning, as they sat at breakfast. "I can't help but praise you for the way you have been playing ball. When I was young ball playing was all the rage, but they did not have pitchers like they have now. I am glad you have made a name for yourself, for there is nothing better in the way of exercise than playing baseball. Finish the trip with Mr. Roberts, by all means, and your mother and I will accompany you and help cheer you on to victory."

Saturday afternoon there was a record-breaking crowd at the Buffalo ball grounds.

When the boys of the Unknown Nine appeared on the field they received an ovation that they were bound to remember.

The people had heard all about the great nine, and they simply fell right in with them, to use the expression.

The Buffalo team had been playing great ball all the season, however, so there was going to be no walkover for the boys.

If he had ever pitched a good game in his life, Charlie Cooper meant to do it that day.

It would have made no difference to him if the strongest team in the National League had been pitted against the Unknowns. He was going to pitch—and pitch the game of his life.

The game started with the Unknowns at the bat.

Bob Harrington was the first up.

At the third ball pitched he sent out a liner to centerfield which was fielded rather bad, and he got first easily.

Joe Murray came next.

The pitcher tried all the tricks he knew, but Murray was not one of the sort to be caught, and he walked to first on balls.

A yell went up from the bleachers as this happened, for there was no mercy shown for a pitcher who would send a man to his base on balls.

The Buffalo crowd did not believe in that sort of work.

(To be continued)

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

HE SAVES RAILROAD FARE, BUT LOSES LEG

Attempts to save railroad fare cost William J. Harvey, Philadelphia, the loss of his leg.

Harvey was "riding the rods" on a westbound freight of the Pennsylvania Railroad and was jolted from his perilous perch when the train passed over a crossing. His leg was crushed.

TY "SLOUGHED" BALL BUT NOT BALL GAME

Whatever any other Detroit players may have done in the Chicago-Detroit series of Labor Day week, 1917, which Swede Risberg says was "sloughed" to Chicago, Ty Cobb apparently played at the top of his form. Cobb, under a cloud in connection with a "fixed" series played two years later, hit safely in all four games and made twelve put outs and one assist, fielding perfectly. Cobb made one hit, in the first game, two in the second, one in the third and two in the fourth. He stole two bases and scored two runs.

BAFFLING DISEASE MAKES CHILDREN ACT LIKE DOGS WITH "RUNNING FITS"

Physicians of Spartanburg County, S. C., are baffled by a strange disease which has made its appearance in several rural schools. Plans are on foot to have noted specialists come here to study patients now under observation.

Children stricken with the disease conduct themselves much like dogs suffering with what is commonly known as "running fits."

One child, who has been suffering for more than a month, will leap suddenly from his bed and dash out of the house at top speed, running until he falls exhausted. As soon as his strength returns, he again jumps to his feet and rushes away. This child has suffered as many as four attacks in one day. Sometimes three or four days elapse without any attack.

Another patient, a large boy, was stricken while sitting in his desk at school. Suddenly jumping up, he threw his school books at nearby

pupils, rushed out of the door and ran blindly away from the building. He collided with several trees, finally being rendered unconscious by the impacts.

He lay semi-conscious for some hours, and then apparently recovered. Next day he was stricken with a similar attack, and these paroxysms, somewhat similar to epilepsy, have recurred from time to time.

No medical treatment has produced any noticeable benefit. Efforts were made for some time, it is said, to prevent news of the affliction from spreading, but it has become known that physicians are of the opinion that eventually symptoms of those afflicted will become more and more serious, resulting in death unless some cure is found.

LAUGHS

"By Jove, I left my purse under my pillow!"
"Oh, well, your servant is honest. isn't she?"
"That's just it. She'll take it to my wife."

"I've traded some worthless stock for a Mexican farm." "Seen it yet?" "Nope, and I don't want to see it. I'm happy now in the belief that I could have lost anything and may have gained."

"Do you lay down the law in your house?"
"Yes," answered Senator Sorghum. "But home isn't so different from Congress. After you've laid down a law the problem of enforcing it arises."

"There is no use in mincing things any longer," began the landlady as a preliminary. "From which I may infer then," said the young man, "that we are to be treated to no more hash at breakfast?" and he made his escape before she could recover.

"So the widow Doyle got all the repairs on her house for nothing, eh? How in the name of goodness did she manage?" "Easy. She was engaged to the carpenter until the roof and floors were fixed, and then she broke with him and married the plumber."

One wing of a large summer resort hotel had burned, and the manager and a group of hotel employees were gazing mournfully at the ruins. "Strange," murmured the manager, "that the fire should have stopped at that gate." "Why sir," excitedly exclaimed an intelligent bellboy, "didn't you know? That gate was shut."

A Dublin car driver was stopped for careless driving by a zealous constable. He refused to give his name. "You'll get yourself into trouble if you don't give me your name." Still the driver refused. "Now, then, what is it?" persisted the constable. "Better find out," retorted the driver. "Sure and I will," said the constable, going around to the side of the car where the name should have been, only to find it rubbed off. "A-ha," said the constable, "now you'll get yourself into worse disgrace, for your name is obliterated." "You're wrong," roared the driver. "'Tis O'Brien."

THE CLEVER CAPTURE

"You must go down to Clendyke and see what you can make of this affair," said Superintendent Sharpe, of the London detective force, to me. "This is the work of the same clever gang who walked off with Lady Woodley's jewels, while she, her husband and friends were sitting cozily at an entertainment. Great Cæsar! The rascals have made a fine haul of it this time."

There was no doubt about it. Clendyke Grange, the residence of Colonel Grendon, had been "cracked" in the most audacious manner.

It appeared that the colonel and his wife had left the Grange early after dinner to patronize a village concert for the benefit of some local charity. No sooner were they out of the house than the thieves set to work. They started operations by securing the doors with hooks and strong cords, and having borrowed a ladder, conveniently left at an empty building undergoing repairs, they skipped lightly into Mrs. Grendon's dressing-room and helped themselves to jewelry to the value of several thousand pounds.

Mrs. Grendon had not been married more than three months, and as usual her wedding presents had been duly advertised in every fashionable newspaper. Thieves laugh in their sleeves when they read these glowing accounts, and well they may. It is simply putting their cunning to the test, and in many instances they have much the best of the bargain.

The moment that Superintendent Sharpe put the job into my hands I set my head to work as to the best disguise to assume, and I determined upon putting up at a hotel in a market town near to Clendyke as a commercial traveler.

So off I started, cigar in mouth, rug over arm, and no end of dummy samples. I scarcely hoped for success, as the thieves had already twelve hours' start; but as no strangers had been noticed at Clendyke's railway station, I concluded that the "gentlemen" I was in search of had either reached London by the road or were still hiding in the neighborhood.

Among the valuables stolen from Clendyke Grange was a crocodile-skin purse, containing three ten-pound notes, the numbers of which were known. It was a blustering day early in February when I left L—— street station. A pair of spectacles and a respirator added to my disguise, and gave me the appearance of a middle-aged representative of a highly respectable firm, and in the habit of taking every care of myself. The official who sounds a bell for the main line trains to start did not recognize me, although I had known him for years, and I was satisfied that my "get up" would fail to attract the attention of anybody on the lookout.

Up to the moment of the bell ringing I was the sole occupant of a compartment; but just as the engine gave an ear-splitting shriek in response to the guard's whistle the door opened, in flew a buff-colored portmanteau, and in bounced a short, stout, fussy man.

"I hope I did not alarm you," said he, unslinging a black satchel from his shoulders and pitching it into a corner and winding a rug round his

knees. "A fool of a porter sent me to the wrong platform, and I only caught the train by the skin of my teeth. Bless me, I never thought I should live to be so out of breath."

I assured him that his appearance had been so sudden that I had had no time for apprehension on his account or on my own, and then we began to chat about ordinary topics.

I soon discovered that my fellow-passenger was an ardent lover of sport. He seemed to be well versed in the pedigree of every notable greyhound, and as to horses, he had the names and performances of the racing tracks at the end of his fingers. Racing was not in my line, but I held my own fairly well in this instance.

"Some people who arrogate to themselves that they are the essence of respectability would not care to sit in the company of Dick Wedge—that's me," said my communicative friend. "I am a bookmaker, and not ashamed to own it. Look at your Stock Exchange. What goes on there but gambling?"

Mr. Wedge began to interest me. He was so open-minded and ingenious that I took a strong fancy to him, and asked him to share my flask of brandy. Mock modesty was not one of his weaknesses, and he made no bones about helping himself, which he did freely, and then asked me whither I was bound. I told him Ganningtree, and he seemed delighted, for he was going there, too.

"Then we shall see something of you," cried Mr. Wedge, positively beaming with smiles. "I suppose you know Ganningtree very well?"

"I must confess I do not," I replied. "I am working this round for one of our men who is unwell."

"Oh, well, you'll not be sorry to get away. Ganningtree is a miserable hole. It's not far from Clendyke, which the papers are full about today. A clever piece of work that!"

"Rather too clever for the police to unravel, I should say."

"Metal in the melting pot, stones snipped out of their settings and sold to the Jews, eh?" Mr. Wedge laughed and rubbed his hands as if the idea tickled him immensely. "Not long ago," he continued, "I was passing through a certain street in London, and to my amazement I saw men selling diamonds as openly as costermongers sell cabbages on Saturday nights."

"I know the thoroughfare you allude to," I said, "and I have often wondered that the diamond merchants, as I suppose they call themselves, are not upset and robbed; they seem to have no especial protection from the police."

"They don't want it. You see, or—or—so I should suppose, they know the shady characters, and may have dealings with them."

"That is a bold assertion," I said.

"But a natural one," Mr. Wedge rejoiced. "Now, suppose your parcels contained gems instead of patterns, would you feel quite so easy in your mind?"

"I confess I should not."

"Very well, then," said Mr. Wedge, warming to his subject. "I stick to the idea that these men, sleek, fat, and well-to-do as they are, have no terror for thieves, or they would not strut about with jewels to the value of thousands of

pounds in their pockets. Any further news about the burglary?"

"Nothing worth mentioning," I replied, handing him the paper. "The Press seems to be of the opinion that the burglars reached London by midnight and have already disposed of the booty."

Mr. Wedge refused to part with me at the station. He insisted upon helping me to get my parcels into the ramshackle one-horse 'bus connected with the White Hart, and we rode in company to the hotel.

I had some difficulty in getting sleeping quarters, as the place was full; but at last I was shown into an attic, and, having washed up and locked up my "samples," I descended to the coffee room.

Writing at a table sat a man, who gave me a sharp, inquiring glance as I entered. I gave him a sign, he returned it, and I knew that he was a detective from N——. Mr. Wedge was in the bar at that moment, quaffing hot brandy and water, and inquiring whether there were any letters or telegrams, or whether anybody coming by the down train had inquired for him. He was answered in the negative to all those questions.

This gave me time to exchange a few words with my brother detective, whose name was Rushmer, and to run my eyes down a page of the local directory.

"Before I have anything to eat or settle down," I said, "I'll make a few calls. Beg pardon," I added, turning to Rushmer, "may I take the liberty of asking if you are on the road?"

"Yes; I represent Leigh & Ashton, dealers in hardware and cutlery. I came from Bentley, and want to get away early in the morning, if I can; so I may as well trot out with you, and do a little business on my own account."

"I wish you would," said I, "because I am a perfect stranger to the place, and may get a little muddled and mixed in these tortuous streets."

By this time Mr. Wedge was in the room, minus his boots, and his feet encased in a warm pair of slippers. He sat crouching over the fire, reading something apparently of great interest. I glanced over his shoulder and saw that he was consulting a copy of "Ruff's Guide."

This, so far as he was concerned, was innocence in itself; but I began to have a strong longing to see what his clerk and son were like. Rushmer and I strolled out, and it was not until we were well out of sight of the hotel that we spoke.

"Well," said I, "what do you make of it?"

"Drawn blank," he replied. "The colonel's wife will never see her jewels again."

"No strangers were reported as having taken the London train," said I, "nor on the down line, so far as we can learn at headquarters."

We returned to the hotel in about an hour and dined.

Mr. Wedge had kindly waited for us, and we found him excellent company. He was full of anecdotes, and seemed to have met many distinguished people in his time.

At this moment the door opened, and in walked two smartly attired young gentlemen.

"Why, Dick," cried Mr. Wedge, addressing the youngest, "how late you are! My son, gentlemen; my clerk, Jack Filbert, and—ha, ha—a rather

tough nut to crack. He is the sharpest penciler I know of. The 'boys'—the organized gangs—can't come the high game over him. Can they, Jack?"

"I should say not."

Mr. Filbert and the two Wedges passed the evening in the commercial room and retired early.

Rushmer and I were the last to leave.

We were up early in the morning and sat down to breakfast at eight o'clock. Wedge, the younger, and Jack Filbert presently appeared, and soon after Wedge, senior, came down.

There was a marked change in him. His eyes were dull, his cheeks drawn, and as he sank into a chair he pressed his hand to his brow.

"It's no use, Dick," he groaned. "I can't attend the course today. I've got one of my old bilious attacks coming on and shall go back to London."

There was a train in half an hour, and he elected to go by it.

And so did I, or rather, I made up my mind to interview Mr. Wedge just before the train came in, and if all went as I began to suspect, to ask him to favor me with a little more of his company.

There were ten minutes to the good when I reached the station. Mr. Wedge had taken shelter in the waiting-room and sat leaning on his elbows on his portmanteau placed beside him.

"Hello!" he cried. "Who expected to see you?"

"I come on a little friendly errand," I replied. "You have taken your son's portmanteau instead of your own."

"Who says so?" he demanded, starting.

"I do," I responded. "Now, Mr. Wedge, I will be plain with you. I am a detective, but wish to act as a gentleman. I may have made a great mistake, of course, but I rather fancy that there is something more valuable in that portmanteau than clothes. I must ask you to let me see for myself."

"I—I demand to see your authority," he faltered.

"These will tell their own tale," said I, clicking a pair of handcuffs over his wrists. "Your son as you call him, and Mr. Filbert are in safe keeping by this time. Hist!"

I hailed a constable who happened to be on the platform, and, with a key which I took from his waistcoat pocket, proceeded to open the portmanteau.

"You needn't take the trouble," my prisoner said, grinning feebly. "The swag is all there. I'm sorry for the boys, but they must do their bit, I suppose. You've worked this very cleverly, and are one of the few men who could have hoodwinked me."

In less than an hour, Wedge, who was the "fence," and the two burglars were under lock and key. The robbery had been artfully and cleverly planned and carried out. As soon as it was accomplished, the two burglars went by the road to N—— and back to Ganningtree, where they had arranged to meet Wedge and change portmanteaus with him. This they thought would blind the railway officials and men on the watch. All this had been previously arranged, and very nearly succeeded.

The real names of the burglars do not matter now, but they were simply pupils of the rascal Wedge, who took a voyage to Botany Bay.

CURRENT NEWS

RARE FOSSIL BIRD GIVEN TO INSTITUTE

A "fossil" bird, preserved in alcohol, was recently given to the Smithsonian Institution by B. H. Swales, ornithologist and member of its staff.

It is the mesite, also known as the oatelo, a strange archaic species, with no near living relatives.

NEW SNAKESKIN VEST IS GIFT TO COOLIDGE

President Coolidge finds himself in position to blossom out in a snakeskin vest, if he is so inclined.

The first of the usual run of Christmas gifts which annually flow into the White House has proved to be such a garment, home-tailored, the gift of Joe Etinson, of Rumsey, Ky.

The vest consists of strips of the skins of rattlers neatly pieced together. Five rattles were tucked away in a pocket of the vest.

CONTROL OF AGE SEEN BY DOCTOR

Control of old age, rather than restoration of lost youth, is the aim of the followers of Professor Steinach, Dr. Harry Benjamin, Steinach specialist, announced to reporters when he returned from Berlin on the White Star liner *Majestic* recently.

He condemned the use of the word "rejuvenation" as being inapplicable in the case. He attended the first international conference of sexology in Berlin and described it a victory for Professor Steinach and his method of "old age control."

He expressed surprise when informed of the action of the censors in banning the Steinach film in this country. He said it had been shown without hindrance in all the Berlin theatres.

PROFESSOR URGES MAN REVERT TO THE WILDS

"Back to the wilds" was prescribed as a cure for subnormal persons by Prof. Ernest W. MacBride of the Imperial College of Science, lecturing before the conference of educational societies. He gave emphatic warning against the danger to civilization through the increase of weaklings, due to the marriage of unfit men and women.

"If England could transport a majority of its city population to the wilder parts of Australia and leave them there more or less to their own resources," Professor MacBride declared, "those who survived would develop into respectable persons after two or three generations."

CATCH ELEPHANT, THREE DAYS A. W. O. L.; BUILD FIRE BY HIM TO THAW HIM OUT

After roaming three days through four counties in southeastern Kansas, Diamond, a circus elephant, was captured by his trainer, eighteen miles southeast of Garnett. The trainer and assistants, with horses from the winter quarters of the circus, at Quenemo, from which the animal

escaped, overtook Diamond and subdued him without great difficulty.

Diamond recognized the horses and permitted them to approach. Then ropes were fastened about the four-ton beast and he was tied to a tree.

A fire was built near Diamond to thaw him out, and the circus men hoped the warmth would save him from threatened pneumonia.

In his self-conducted winter expedition over the countryside, the elephant smashed fences and outbuildings and stepped on a pig. Appearing in a school yard at Garnett, he terrorized school children before being driven away.

The trail of property damage, however, was not great, and Diamond injured none of the hundreds of farmers who chased him, firing with shotguns and small calibre rifles. The bullets made little impression on Diamond's hide.

MARINE IN A RUNAWAY BALLOON ROPES A TREE; SPARED FROM SEA AS AUTO, BLIMP, PLANE PURSUE

Lieutenant Frank J. Ulhig, U. S. Marines, was blown eight miles east of the Lakehurst flying field recently in a runaway kite balloon. He saved himself from being carried out to sea by roping a tree with a steel cable trailing from the balloon and holding on until a navy crew brought him down. The tree that saved Lieutenant Ulhig was near the Toms River, four miles from the Atlantic Ocean.

The balloon broke loose while Lieutenant Ulhig was on a training ascension. The ground winch which held the cable broke, releasing the end of the cable, and the balloon soared skyward and eastward, propelled by the wind at 20 miles an hour. Lieutenant Ulhig manipulated the valves of the balloon so as to bring the loose end of the cable close to the ground. The cable had no hook or anchor, and Lieutenant Ulhig failed repeatedly in attempts to foul it in a tree. At last, just as it seemed as if he would never succeed, he caught it on the fork of a small tree and it twisted around the trunk.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant C. E. Bauch, U. S. N., had followed the runaway in an automobile. As the Toms River Road leads due east from Lakehurst, and as the balloon's course was due east, Lieutenant Bauch was able to keep close to the runaway. After satisfying himself that the cable would hold to the tree, he motored back to Lakehurst and fetched a rescue crew with a winch mounted on a truck. The crew attached a snatch block to the cable and brought the balloon down.

After Lieutenant Ulhig got out, uninjured, the balloon was deflated and taken back to Lakehurst. The balloon was slightly damaged. Had he been carried much further seaward Lieutenant Ulhig might have been forced to deflate the balloon while aloft in it, a dangerous operation, or to have abandoned it in a parachute and let it drift to sea.

The navy blimp J-3 and a navy plane followed the balloon on its runaway flight, but returned to the air field when it was seen that the balloon was safely moored.

TIMELY TOPICS

**"MA" FREES TWO MORE; TOTAL NOW
IS 2,962**

Two full pardons have been announced by Governor M. A. Ferguson, bringing her two-year clemency total to 2,962.

**HOME TELEVISION SET WILL PICTURE
OUTSIDE EVENTS**

Television apparatus costing \$150, which will enables wives to check up on telephone messages from husbands detained at the office, will be in every home by the end of next year.

This is the prophecy of John L. Baird, inventor, who demonstrated the instrument tonight. He transmitted human living faces from a room of inky blackness on to a screen fixed in another room where the watchers were in total darkness.

This was accomplished by means of an invisible ray traveling 186,000 miles per second.

NOT THE SAME LANGUAGES!

Terms used by English telephone operators are different from those used generally throughout the United States. Here are a few:

America: "Number, please?" England: "Number desired?"

America: "No answer." England: "The telephone does not reply."

America: "Line's busy." England: "The line's engaged."

America: "Line out of order." England: "Telephone not available."

America: "Trying to complete your call." England: "Your connection is being attempted."

America: "Hello!" England: "Are you there?"

**LOSES PART OF BRAIN. MENTALITY
STILL HIGH**

Although he recently lost five ounces of his brain in an accident, Alfonso Bedra, ten, is described as above the average mentally.

The boy suffered a cut in his head when struck by an automobile and lost part of his brains from the occipital region. He recovered after an operation and lately was given an examination by Dr. Francis Gerty, Superintendent of the Psychopathic Hospital.

Doctor Gerty said the boy was above the average mentally and described his physical condition as excellent. The youth's only difficulty is that he is unable to see when he looks to the right because of an injury to the left occipital lobe of the brain.

**MAJOR EARTHQUAKES DURING PAST
SIX YEARS**

Among the major earthquakes during the past six years have been the following:

Leninakin, Armenia, Oct. 22, 1926; 600 killed; damage, \$60,000,000.

Santa Barbara, Cal., June 29, 1925; 12 killed; damage \$5,000,000.

Toyo-Oka, Japan, May 23, 1925; 381 killed; damage, \$410,000,000.

Antofagasta-Valdivia, Chili, Nov. 10, 1924; 1,800 killed.

Turbat-i-Haidari, Persia, May 27, 1924; 1,000 killed.

Tokyo-Yokohama, Japan, Sept. 1, 1923; 192,000 dead or missing; 580,000 homes destroyed.

Central China, Dec. 16, 1920; 200,000 killed; ten cities destroyed.

**GIRLS! IT'S LEGS THAT MEAN MOST!
WOMAN DOCTOR, 102, ADVISES**

Listen, girls! Cultivate your legs. It is good looking legs that mean most to a woman in this world.

You can take this advice on the word of a woman who has had exactly 102 years in which to think the matter over. She is Dr. Marie Charlotte De Goliere Davenport, a lady from Vienna, who has documentary proof she has lived beyond the century mark. Said this apper great-grandmother:

"Of course, if a girl has lost her good looking legs, the next best thing she can do is to cultivate her mind. But remember, it's the legs that count, over education, intellect and culture."

Doctor Davenport, visiting in Washington, is accompanied by her husband, forty-seven years her junior. One would never suspect her age, for she sees without the aid of glasses, hears perfectly and displays marked vitality.

**LIGHT BLOCKED BY A HAIR MEASURED
BY NEW CELLS**

A mechanism so sensitive it measures accurately the amount of light cut off by the passage of a human hair before an electric bulb has been placed on exhibit in the Power Exposition in Grand Central Palace. It is about 2,000 times more sensitive to variations in light than the human eye, but, according to the demonstrators, it is not nearly so refined an instrument as could be built upon the same principle.

The mechanism, in a small box, is part of the laboratory equipment of the General Electrical Company. It consists of two photo-electric cells, a relay, and a millimetre connected with two ordinary electric cells. A photo-electric cell is a link between electricity and light. Somewhat like an ordinary radio bulb in appearance, it has a silvered interior coating. One side is a clear spot for the entrance of light rays, and on the opposite side is a thin coating of potassium, which reacts to light, setting up an electric current. If one cell receives more light than the other, the difference is recorded on the millimetre.

A human hair or diffused smoke, invisible to the human eye, coming between the light and one cell, registers.

The photo-electric cell is used in sending photographs over telephone and telegraph lines and by radio. It also has been applied to grading the quality of tobacco leaves and testing the purity of liquids. It is believed, W. A. Gluesing, the demonstrator said, that many additional ways of applying these cells to industrial uses will be found.

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